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FEBRUARY 1993

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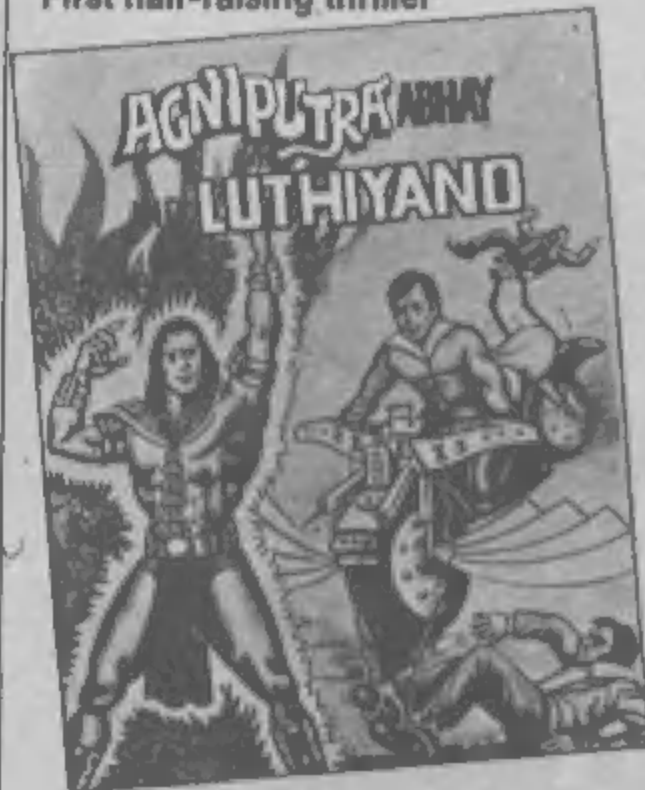
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CHANDAMAMA

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THE MAGIC PALACE: Mahendranath helps Princess Vidyavati escape before she is taken on a long journey by palanquin at the orders of the 'master'. They watch the palanquin on its way from the palace. Who has taken her place in the palanquin, wonders Vidyavati, as she crosses the jungle along with Mahendranath. They receive a warm welcome by the hermit in the hut. He has a few surprises for them before they set out for Veergirl. At the palace, the princess is presented—but she is not Vidyavati. The story goes for an exciting end.

VEER HANUMAN: Following the death of Indrajit at the hands of Lakshmana, Ravana prepares himself to meet his enemies. He arranges a yaga. Vibhishana cautions Rama and Lakshmana. The yaga should not be allowed to take place. Angada offers to go and disturb the yaga. Ravana is at his wit's end. Sage Narada appears before him and reminds him of Mahiravana, the king of the nether world, who will readily come to his help.

THE RING: The mystery of the Mahratta ring deepens. PLUS all your favourite features.

Printed by B.V. REDDI at Prasad Process Private Ltd, 188 N.S.K. Salai, Madras 600 026 (India) and published by B. VISWANATHA REDDI on behalf of CHANDAMAMA PUBLICATIONS, Chandamama Buildings, Vadapalani, Madras 600 026 (India). The stories, articles and designs contained herein are the exclusive property of the publishers and copying or adapting them in any manner will be dealt with according to law.



Controlling Editor:
NAGI REDDI



Founder:
CHAKRAPANI

THE LAW OF NATURE

Be one with Nature. That is an advice our elders often give us. What does that mean?

Many of us might have wondered, at one time or another—

Why is the sky blue? Why is the sun hot? And why are the moon's rays cool if it is supposed to get its light from the sun? Why do the stars never stop twinkling?

Or who decided what colour which flower should have? Why should the grass everywhere be green? Who trained the peacock to dance? Why should the spider weave its web in a particular way?

Such questions are endless. Some people may explain them away as gifts of god or the creator. Some others, with a knowledge of science, will say that they are truths of nature and cannot, therefore, be changed. There are people still trying to find scientific explanations for these mysteries of Nature.

The most perfect of all creations is man himself, the way the human organs are expected to work with perfect precision. But the moment he goes against nature, the system fails and the precision goes awry. As a result, he has to suffer from all sorts of illnesses and diseases.

Nature has bestowed on all living beings—men, animals, birds—peace and bliss. Nature, too, has a 'government' and it is 'administered' in a systematically-built law.

Let us not go against the law of Nature.



National Award for Chandamama

There could not have been a better New year gift for your favourite magazine, when it received a National Award in the form of a trophy and a cheque for Rs. 25,000/- from the FIE Foundation, Ichalkaranji, Maharashtra, at a glittering ceremony on December 27.

The citation, *inter alia*, states :

"All children and their parents are fond of *Chandamama*, which is published monthly and has become an inseparable part of their homes and lives. The late Shri Chakrapani visualised a magazine for children for fulfilment of parental duty, which has to be in the form of a movement noble in conception and novel and purposeful in presentation. In 1947, the present Controlling Editor, Shri B. Nagi Reddi, took up the noble cause with a missionary zeal, and today *Chandamama* is being published in 12 languages, apart from a Braille edition.

"*Chandamama*, in its colourful service to the cause of children and women's education, has given thousands of stories, serials, mythology covering epics and *puranas*, folklore, and biographies. It believes that the country's youngsters, whichever part they belong to and whatever language they speak, are ONE and their aims and aspirations are the same. It is also the magazine's conviction that notwithstanding the tremendous diversity that pervades the life of our country, its youth could be bound in UNITY of thought and ideas and thus achieve National Integration."

What we should have proudly claimed as our achievement over these four-and-a-half decades, the FIE Foundation, to which we are beholden beyond words, has stated for us. The Foundation has, during the last two decades, recognised outstanding contributions in the fields of Science & Technology, Engineering, Business Management, Arts, Culture, Humanities, Agriculture and Sports. Its endeavour is to bring to the limelight outstanding personalities and their contributions in their respective arenas, promoting National Integration.

We would like to share our joy with you, our ardent admirers, sympathisers, and well-wishers.

B. Viswanatha Reddi
For *Chandamama Publications*





MAN'S FIRST SHELTER

Long, long before towns and cities grew, long before villages came into being, men lived in the forests. If the greater part of the earth's surface is water, what covered the earth next to it was once forest.

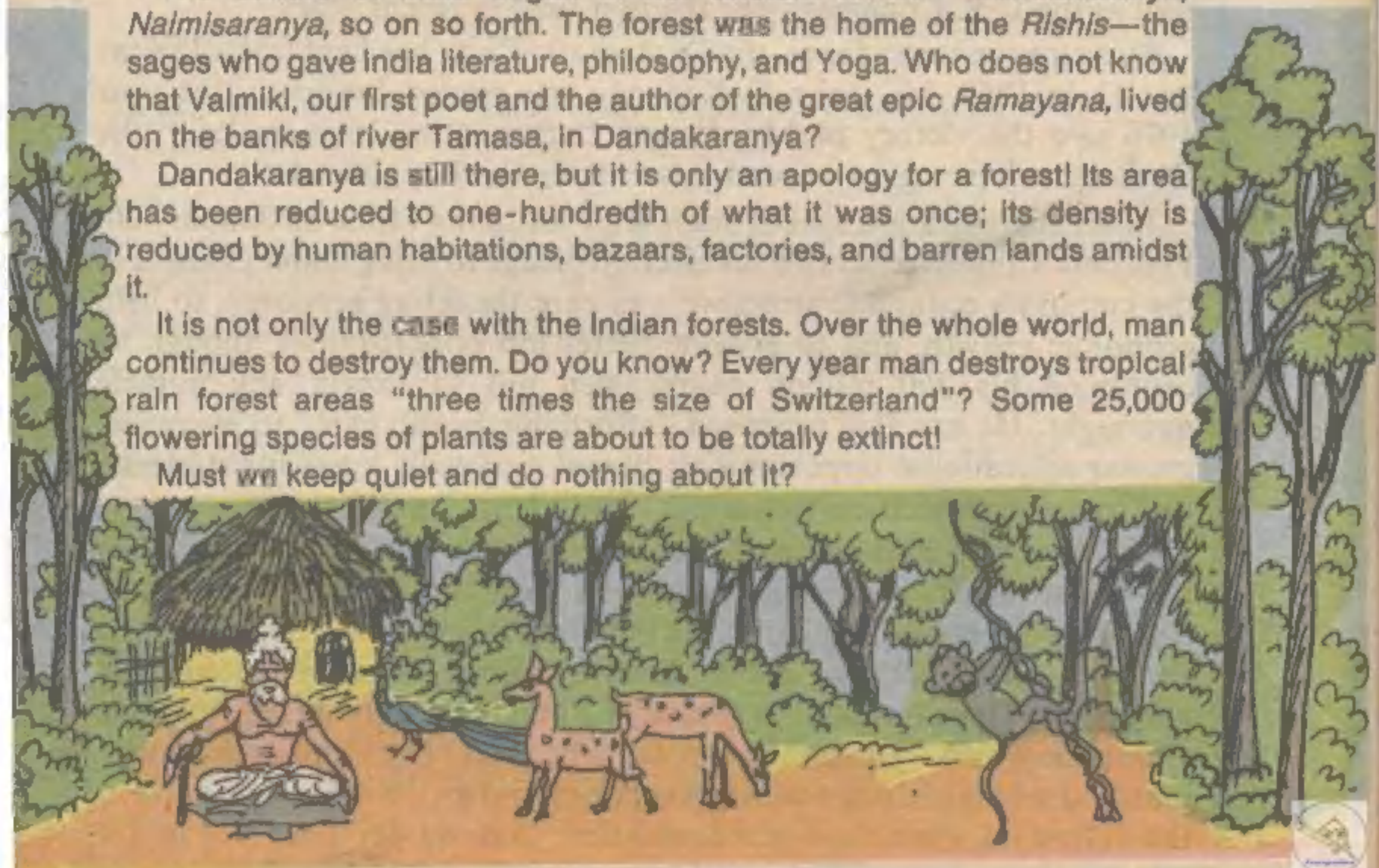
The plant was the earliest manifestation of life on the land. How magnificent and how beautiful, how gracious and how gorgeous, this manifestation is! From the humble grass to the huge banyan or oak—how different plant life can be. With what a variety of fruits and flowers they adorn the earth!

The culture of India began in her ancient forests—*Dandakaranya*, *Naimisaranya*, so on so forth. The forest was the home of the *Rishis*—the sages who gave India literature, philosophy, and Yoga. Who does not know that Valmiki, our first poet and the author of the great epic *Ramayana*, lived on the banks of river Tamasa, in *Dandakaranya*?

Dandakaranya is still there, but it is only an apology for a forest! Its area has been reduced to one-hundredth of what it was once; its density is reduced by human habitations, bazaars, factories, and barren lands amidst it.

It is not only the case with the Indian forests. Over the whole world, man continues to destroy them. Do you know? Every year man destroys tropical rain forest areas "three times the size of Switzerland"? Some 25,000 flowering species of plants are about to be totally extinct!

Must we keep quiet and do nothing about it?



THE NEW U.S. PRESIDENT

BILL CLINTON



The 46-year-old erstwhile Governor of Arkansas State, Mr. Bill Clinton, has just taken over as the 42nd President of the U.S.A.

In the Presidential elections held on November 3, he scored a creditable victory over President George Bush himself and Mr. Ross Perot, a rather late independent entrant into the fray. Mr. Clinton polled 44 per cent of the popular votes, against 39 per cent secured by Mr. Bush, and 17 per cent by Mr. Perot. Considered as a record turnover in several years, some 100 million voters, representing 55 per cent of the electorate,

exercised their franchise. In the elections, Mr. Clinton's

Democratic Party secured the control of both the White House as well as the U.S. Congress—for the first time in recent years.

By a strange coincidence, the Democratic Party has kept up its 16 year 'cycle'. In 1960, Mr. John F. Kennedy was elected President; the year 1976 saw the victory of Mr. Jimmy Carter; now, 16 years later, the Democrats have again wrested power from the Republicans.

In his Inauguration speech soon after assuming office on January 20, President Clinton reiterated his election pledge to bring about changes in the country's economic structure—to cure the ailing economy, to help economic growth, and to provide better job opportunities, though he cautioned his 250 million countrymen not to expect any miracle overnight. He has also promised "affordable health care" to everyone, greater educational opportunities, liberal repayable loans for students, and improvement in environment.

In fact, it was on the plank of "change" that he won the election, while the thrust of Mr. Bush's campaign was "continuity". Mr. Clinton had called for sweeping changes in the American way of life. He recognised the fact that Americans are a "diverse people, of many colours and languages. This diversity is a source of strength to all of us here at home and to the world." On another occasion he said: "My vision is that every man and woman in our country, every boy and girl, will be able to live to the fullest of their God-given abilities, that we should revel in the

ethnic and racial diversity of our country, instead of letting it be the source of pain and division."

AL GORE



Born posthumously two months after his father died in a car accident, William Jefferson Blythe IV took the surname of his stepfather, Roger Clinton. His mother was an anaesthetist. He studied in a free public school on scholarships. After graduating in Foreign Relations from Georgetown University in Washington, he went to Oxford on a prestigious Rhodes scholarship to study Philosophy and Politics. Later, he joined Yale University in the U.S.A. for Law.

His first attempt to enter the U.S. Congress was not successful. The second time, he was elected the Attorney-General of Arkansas. He was later elected Governor, but was defeated

in his bid for a second term. Two years later, he staged

■ come-back, repeating his feat five times in all, earning him the description "Come-Back Kid". The reference is to his young age—for the first time, the U.S.A. has a President who was born after the Second World War. He is the sixth U.S. President to reach the highest office before 50. Incidentally, the record is held by Theodore Roosevelt who became President in 1901 when he was only 42.

Mrs. Hillary Clinton, whom he met in the Yale Law School, has been a senior partner in ■ major law firm. She was twice named as one of 100 top lawyers in the U.S.A. She is an activist in the field of children's rights. Their 12-year-old only daughter, Chelsea, is a student in ■ public school.

Two years younger than Mr. Clinton is his running-mate and now Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, who has been a leading environmentalist. Like his father Senator Albert Gore Sr., he was also ■ Senator and led the U.S. Senate delegation to the Rio Earth Summit (see *Chandamama*, August 1992).

More about Bill Clinton

- He loves sports, plays golf.
- He has a fascination for movies, reads spy thrillers.
- His favourite is mango-chutney ice-cream.
- He aims at creating a "Re-United States of America" to meet the challenges of the end of Cold War.



A Practical Solution

Pasupati was an erudite scholar. He was once honoured by the king who gave him a gift of one thousand coins. He thanked the king, put the money in his bag, and started on his way home. En route to his elder brother's house. So, he decided to stay there overnight, before proceeding further.

Ganapati was steeped in poverty. When he knew that his brother had some money with him, some evil thoughts came to his mind. He decided to steal the money, and the best time to do it was at night. When Pasupati was fast asleep, he managed to remove the bag containing the coins and hid it somewhere in the house, thinking he would use the money after Pasupati went away.

He was upset when he got up in

the morning and found the bag missing. He informed Ganapati of the missing bag with the money. "Your money-bag? Missing? How strange! Don't take it to heart," said Ganapati, without a trace of sorrow or anxiety.

This made Pasupati suspect his brother. He was convinced that Ganapati himself must have removed the bag and kept it somewhere. The problem was, how to retrieve it from his brother. He went and met the village chief and told him everything, including his suspicion about his brother. "But I've pity on him," Pasupati added. "I wouldn't have bothered much if I myself didn't need the money badly right now. Otherwise, I would have gladly given it to him."

I shall be grateful if you can recover it from him. But he shouldn't be blamed under any circumstances."

The village 'pradhan' thought for a while and said, "I think there's a way out. Don't worry. I shall ensure that your brother is not accused of any crime."

A while later, two persons went to Ganapati and told him that the village chief wished to see him. He was surprised to see his brother there, being held like a criminal. "I've received a complaint that your brother has stolen one thousand coins from the royal treasury. He stayed with you last night, didn't he? I want to conduct a search in your house. I'm sure you don't have any objection. Your family need not be upset about it," said the

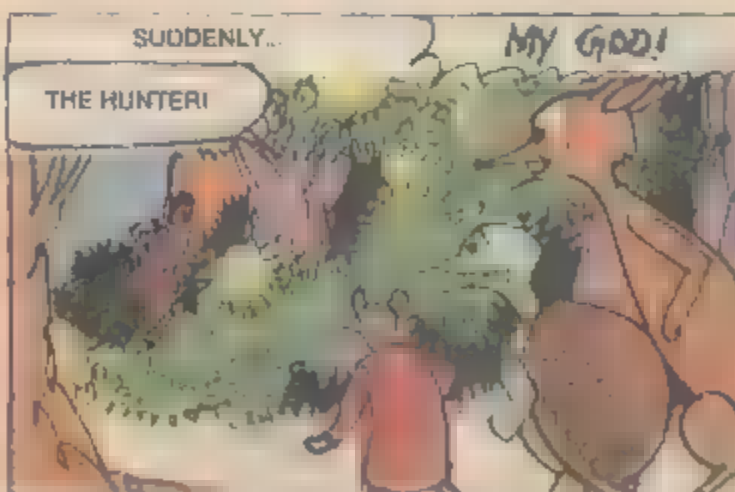
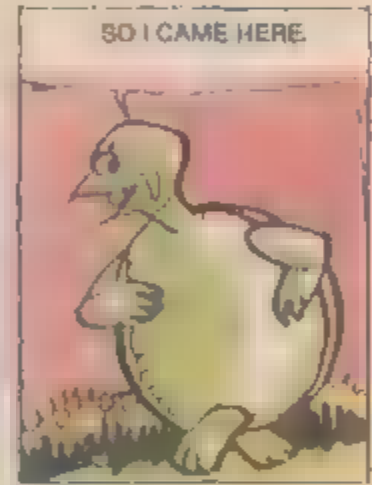
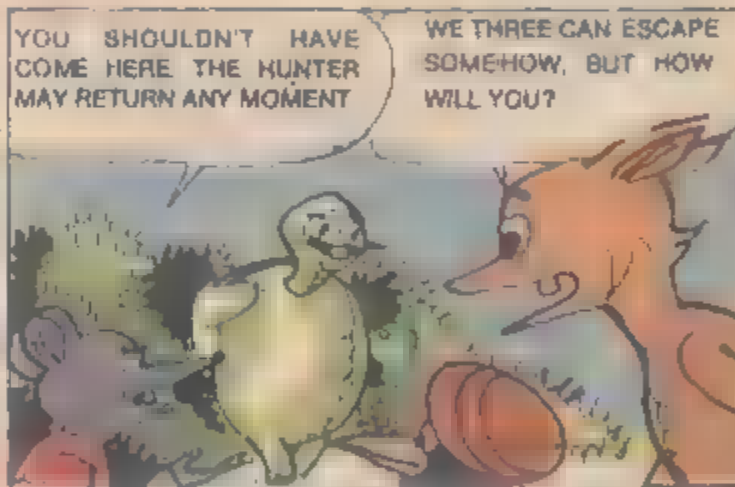
pradhan.

Ganapati was flabbergasted. He rushed home, picked up the money-bag, and kept it among Pasupati's belongings. Soon, the men sent by the *pradhan* searched the house and found the bag with the money. Ganapati heaved a sigh of relief and went to the village chief again, only to find him hand over the bag to Pasupati!

"It appears the money stolen from the treasury has already been recovered. It was stolen by someone else. In fact, this money was a gift to Pasupati from the king. Someone had given me wrong information," explained the *pradhan*.

Pasupati profusely thanked the village *pradhan* and left along with Ganapati.





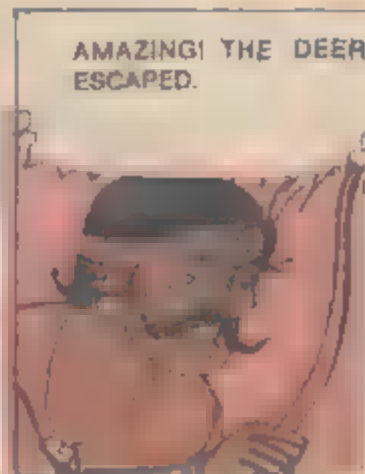
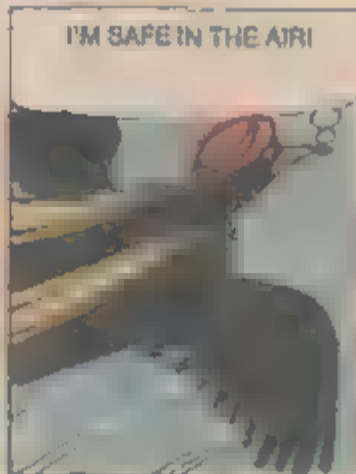
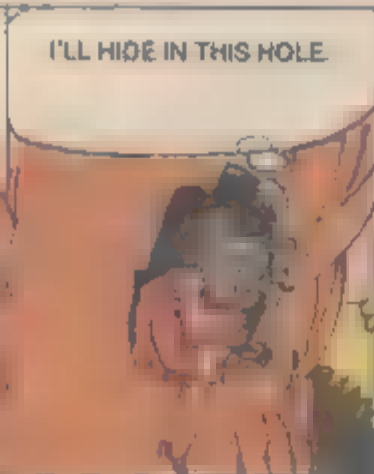
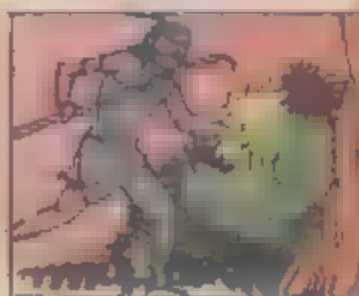
The world is within the knowledge of him who knows the properties of taste, sight, touch, hearing, and smell. (Thirukkural)

■ PANIC. THE
THE MOUSE, AND THE
CROW RUN HITHER
THITHER...

I'LL HIDE IN THIS HOLE

I'M SAFE IN THE AIR!

AMAZING! THE DEER
ESCAPED.



AH! STILL, I'VE THIS TURTLE!

OH! MY DEAR HE'S
ME!

THE TURTLE RUNS...

NOW YOU'LL BE
SAFE HERE!

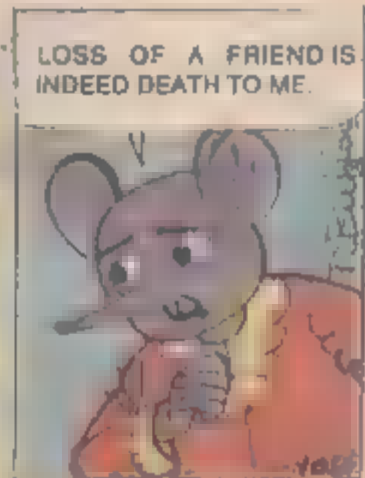
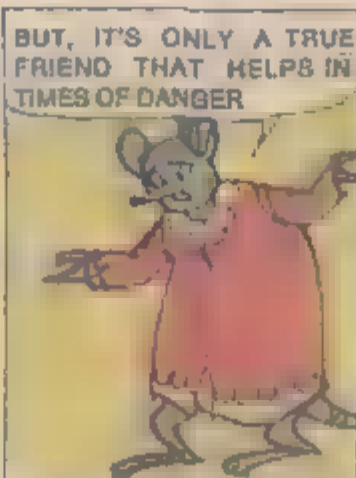


WHAT A MISFORTUNE! I
FREED ONE FRIEND; NOW
ANOTHER FRIEND IS
CAPTURED.

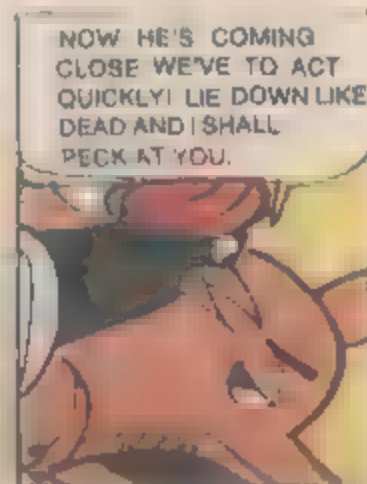
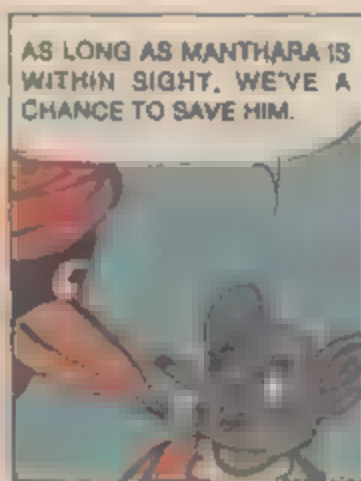
FALSE FRIENDS ARE
MANY, RELATIVES ARE
TOO MANY.

BUT, IT'S ONLY A TRUE
FRIEND THAT HELPS IN
TIMES OF DANGER

LOSS OF A FRIEND IS
INDEED DEATH TO ME.



If the heaven were to dry up, neither the annual festivals will be held
nor the daily worship offered in this world to the Celestials.



There can be no greater source of good than the practice of virtue;
there can be no greater source of evil than when it is forgotten.

HIRANYAKA FREES THE
TURTLE...

RUN, RUN? AHI NOW YOU'RE
SAFE, MY [REDACTED]



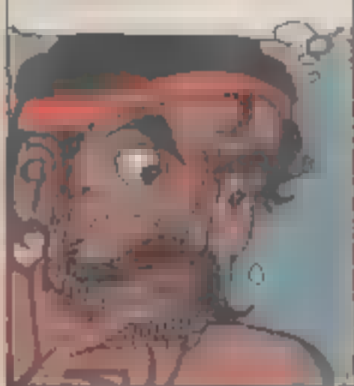
WHAT... IS... IT? WHERE'RE
THE DEER AND THE CROW?



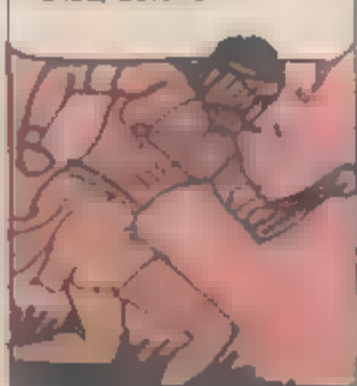
MY GOD! THE
TURTLE ALSO HAS
DISAPPEARED!



THE WHOLE THING LOOKS
MYSTERIOUS!



BETTER I LEAVE THIS
PLACE, QUICKLY!



VISHNUSHARMA CONCLUDES
'MITRALABHA', THE SECOND
PART OF 'PANCHATANTRA'
THUS



MY DEAR PRINCES! YOU SEE
HOW THE FOUR WISE AND
LEARNED FRIENDS OVER-
CAME ALL DIFFICULTIES, BY
REMAINING TOGETHER.

THOUGH [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
WERE LIMITED, THEY
ACHIEVED [REDACTED] PURPOSE
AND [REDACTED] HAPPILY EVER
AFTER...



NOW, DO YOU LIKE TO
HEAR 'SANDHI VIGRAHA'
THE THIRD PART OF 'PAN-
CHATANTRA', WHICH
DEALS WITH WAR AND
PEACE?



ONCE, IN A DEER FOREST, ON
A BANYAN TREE...



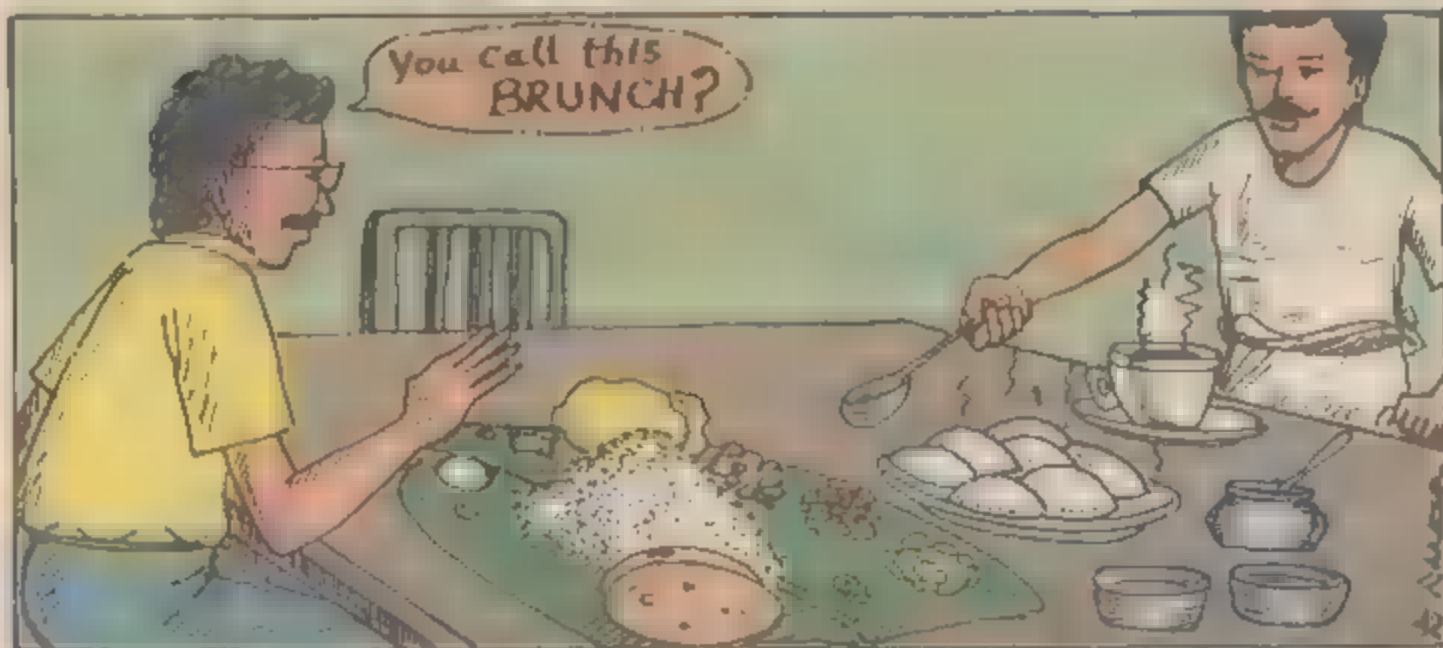
...THERE LIVED A CROW
KING.

To Continue...

Men will treat their children as their greatest wealth, for, it goes to them through the deeds which their children perform on their behalf

BE ALERT—IDIOMATICALLY!

The sky was one patch of blue. It was quite warm outside. *Madhulika* (of *Bhopal*) did not want to go out to the park, so she pulled out a book from the shelf and was trying to concentrate on the thrilling story. Her little brother *Madhav* had joined the other boys in the colony who were playing cricket on the lawn outside. Her mother heard their shouts and came into the drawing room. "Madhulika, dear, *keep a weather eye on the windows!*" she said casually and went back to the kitchen, before she could ask her mother what she really wanted her to do. After all, the weather was fine and there was no indication that it might turn otherwise. There was not one speck of cloud in the sky. She forgot the whole thing for the rest of the day and remembered it only when she heard a peal of thunder at night. The expression merely means, be watchful and alert, so that one will notice if anything unpleasant happens. After all, the boys would have been careless and the ball might have hit the glass windows! The eye is considered ■ the best means by which one can forecast the weather.



Jyotiranjana Biswal, of Durgapur, has heard of portmanteau, which is a sort of suit-case for carrying clothes on a journey. It opens out into two equal halves with a hinge at the back in the middle. But, *portmanteau-word!* What is it? he asks. Such words were first 'coined' by Lewis Carroll in his famous "Alice in Wonderland"—like 'slithy', which has the combined meanings of both slimy and lithe! Portmanteau- words sometimes combine the sounds of two words—like 'brunch' (breakfast, lunch), referring to a meal eaten late in the morning. If you drive along the highways in the U.S.A., you will come across many a 'motel', which are small hotels attached to 'motor stations' (petrol bunks)!



(Mahendranath wakes up Vidyavati and informs her of the prospect of a journey for her by palanquin the next day. She wants to escape before that takes place. The two leave the Magic Palace unnoticed. Old Kamala is at her wit's end when she finds the princess missing. She decides that the palanquin will not go empty. Mahendranath and Vidyavati watch the palanquin go by, accompanied by Kamala. Who's inside? they too wonder.)

The old woman, Kamala, woke up in the middle of the night. She had been instructed to get Princess Vidyavati ready for a long journey. A palanquin would reach the Magic Palace before dawn, and she was to accompany the palanquin till her master himself met them soon after daybreak. Kamala had also been

warned not to let the girls know of the princess's sudden departure. For that matter, she was not even informed where Vidyavati was being taken. Though she remembered her own role in the disappearance of the princess from the lake resort days earlier, she did not now dare ask her master for any detail. She was



glad she was to go with the palanquin only till daybreak.

She soon got ready and went to open the door to go to the room where the princess and one of the girls slept. The door was already open! She came out into the verandah and went to the other room and was about to call Malini to open the door. There was no end to her surprise when Kamala found that door, too, open. What would have happened? Did Malini forget to close it the previous night?

Kamala entered the room. Malini was still asleep. She went

up to the other cot. The princess was not in the bed! There was no indication of her having got up in any hurry. Anyway, she was nowhere in the room, not even near the window where she used to spend a lot of time during the day.

Kamala came out and peeped into the other rooms. No, Vidyavati was not also in the room where the other girls slept. She tried one or two other rooms as well. Everywhere she was greeted by doors already opened! She walked along the verandah, went down the stairs and through the passage. The door to the garden, too, was open! She searched everywhere in the garden. There was no trace of Vidyavati.

Kamala then went down the pathway up to the gate. The lock was in position but with the heavy key inserted in it! The gatekeeper was missing. She hurried back to the mansion. The palanquin might arrive any moment from now. There was no time to lose and there was no point in creating any panic. She quickly thought up a plan, and woke up Malini and asked her to get ready to go on.

journey. Kamala managed to divert her attention so that she would not realise that the princess was not in the room.

She led Malini downstairs just in time to open the gate and let the palanquin-bearers in. "Do I have to travel in this?" the girl asked Kamala unbelievably. "And tell me, where am I being taken?"

"This is not the time to ask any questions. Do as I tell you, Malini!" replied Kamala sternly. "It's the master's orders. He'll meet us on the way, after day-break. Till then, I shall go with the palanquin."

Malini got into the palanquin and drew the curtain. Kamala left the lock and key on the stone seat next to the gate, closed it behind her, and hurried to catch up with the palanquin-bearers. As their way was through the jungle, all of them kept a slow pace. They were not aware that their movements were being watched by two anxious pairs of eyes.

After they came out of the gate, Mahendranath and Vidya-vati found that there was a regular path to the valley below, though it was winding at times.



"We must avoid the path as much as possible, princess, lest we are taken by surprise by people from the mansion," cautioned Mahendranath. "The moment they discover we're missing, they're sure to send out search parties. We must avoid them. I suggest we move very slowly along the path, and hide every now and then to watch for any sound or movement. Once the day breaks, we will be able to climb down the hill through the jungle. There won't be any need then to use the path."

Whenever they felt tired, they



sought a good hiding place. And as they relaxed, they told each other all that had happened in the past few days. Vidyavati recalled how she was taken away from the lake palace on the pretext of being taken to her ailing father. She also gave an account of her life at the Magic Palace and how she was waiting for an opportunity to escape. Mahendranath told her of his meeting first with the Commander-in-Chief and later the king. Of course, he did not omit to tell her of his meeting with the hermit and his gift of a magic ring. He looked at it. It was

aglow all the while.

It was while they were once resting that they heard the chant of the palanquin-bearers, who were then climbing the hill. What Mahendranath heard from his friend was after all true. But who would they now carry in the palanquin? Both of them were curious to know and decided to wait there—hidden behind a huge rock—for the palanquin to come back. Before they got tired of waiting, the chanting was heard once again. The palanquin was evidently returning. From where he was hiding, Mahendranath could not make out many details. But Vidyavati was certain that the figure, clad in white and walking along with the palanquin, was none other than the matronly Kamala. Who, then, could be *inside* the palanquin? If it was she who was expected to go in the palanquin, was someone now impersonating her? The doubt was expressed by Vidyavati herself with a chuckle.

"Princess, we've to be very careful," said Mahendranath. "Once we leave the jungle, we'll have to hide our identity."

"I think I should remove all my

ornaments," responded Vidya-vati. "But let's first cross the jungle. Soon it will be dawn."

It was hardly daybreak when the palanquin-bearers and Kamala came to a clearing, where they saw another palanquin and its bearers, besides three men on horseback. One of them came forward. "Ask the princess to get into the other palanquin!"

Kamala was taken aback. The man who gave the orders was not her master. Unlike him, this man was clean-shaven and was wearing a dress befitting royalty, including a turban. He had a regal look. "But where's my master? I want to talk to him!" she pleaded.

"He's waiting for us elsewhere. Don't worry, the princess will be safely taken to him. You may go back in the palanquin; your master will meet you later," he said, rather curtly.

Kamala thought the voice was familiar and looked at the man's face for a second longer, before she went up to the palanquin, opened the curtain, and said, "Come out, you'll now go in another palanquin." She avoided mentioning any name—Vidya-vati or Malini. Why give room

for any doubt or suspicion?

Malini came out and slowly got into the other palanquin. "They'll take you to the master. Don't worry, you'll be safe!" Kamala assured her, as she drew the curtain. The next moment, the palanquin and the three riders were gone.

Kamala's head was reeling. Everything was so mysterious. She was sure of only one thing. The man's voice was familiar. It sounded like that of the master! The doubt kept her busy thinking as she rode on the palanquin. And if he was her master himself, why did he have to change all his appearance? Also, if he were to find that it was one of the girls employed in the mansion who had been taken to him, instead of the princess, what would be the maid's fate? And what would be her own fate?

Kamala got down from the palanquin at the gate itself and sent away the bearers. The gate-keeper was still absent. She opened the gate, hurried along the pathway and through the garden, entered the verandah and the passage, and began climbing the stairs. Three girls were sitting on the steps with a dazed look.



"Where were you?" they asked in a chorus. "Where's the princess? Where's Malini?" Kamala knew the answers to all the questions, except the one about the princess.

Meanwhile, Vidyavati and Mahendranath found, as the sun rose, that they could traverse the jungle without much difficulty. Whenever he looked at his ring, he found it glowing; the glow gave him some assurance that they both would come out of the jungle safe. He guessed that the big lake at the foot of the mountain would now be not far

away. If they could reach the lake before sunset, they would rest by its side for the night and proceed to the city and palace after the day dawned.

The sun was yet to set. Suddenly, they saw a clearing in front of them. Mahendranath recognised the hut there. He heaved a sigh of great relief. He was also happy that he could keep his promise to the hermit who had asked him to meet him on his way back to the city any time he returned from his mission. As he led Vidyavati towards the hut, he found the hermit coming out of the hut, smiling, as if he knew of their arrival.

"Come, my son. And welcome to you, Princess Vidyavati," he greeted them. "I knew Mahendranath would succeed in his mission."

"But, sir, it was as if you were awaiting us!" said Mahendranath, ■ he got up on his feet, after prostrating before him. "How did you know that we were coming?" he asked, not waiting to suppress his curiosity.

Without giving him a straight answer, the hermit showed him his left palm. The ring on one of

the fingers was aglow! "This ring and the one you're wearing have some special powers. It was, in a way, directing you here. My ring started throwing out a glow the moment you began your journey, sometime just before midnight, am I right? You were then climbing down the hill towards me! Remember, when you left for the mountain that morning, you were going away from me, so I did not wear it. If I had worn it, it would have brought you back here before you even climbed the mountain! You were going on a mission and I didn't want anything to hinder your progress."

Mahendranath was about to ask him how his ring had opened the doors for him and also helped him identify the princess. But he desisted from asking any such question. After all, he and Vidyavati were now safe in the presence of the hermit. With his blessings, they would also return to Veergiri safely.

"I'm very happy that you're with me," said the hermit, looking at Mahendranath and Vidyavati in turn. "You must stay here and rest for the night, and decide when you should start for Veergiri tomorrow."

While they rested, Mahendranath narrated all that had hap-

pened to him after he reached the huge mansion on top of the mountain. And Vidyavati gave an account of her own experiences in that place which she described as the Magic Palace. Mahendranath agreed with her when they tried to unfold some of the mysterious happenings there, for which they could not find an easy explanation. The hermit, most of the time, listened to them and merely assured them that they would safely return to their respective parents.

Soon after they woke up, the hermit had a surprise in store for them. He called them by his side and announced, "Vidyavati, Mahendranath, I've decided to go with you to the capital!" They looked at him in wonderment, of what would have prompted him to take such a decision. Of course, they knew that they would be safe in his company. "You both might be recognised easily," the hermit explained. "If I am with you, people might take us as inmates of some ashram. Till we reach the palace, we would better hide our identity. And I've a reason for that as well. It's a long story, but I shall, all the same, tell you everything very briefly."

— To conclude

ALL ABOUT A COW

There was a rich landlord who always looked for milch cows and bought them for his cattle-farm. Once he went to the weekly market where he saw a cow and its calf presumably for sale. "Is she for sale?" he asked the owner.

"If she is not, I wouldn't have brought her to the market!" replied the owner.

"Does she give good milk?"

"I'm her owner. Would I ever say she doesn't give good milk?"

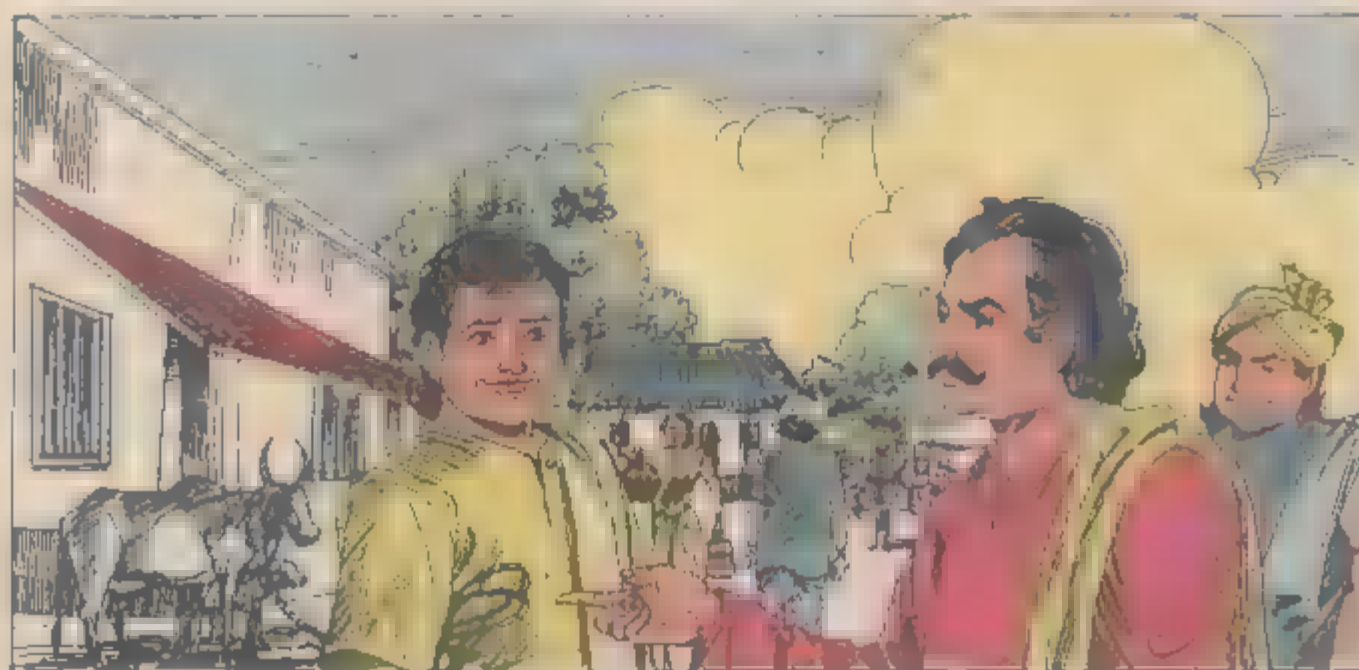
"Is she docile? Will she kick?"

"If you provoke her, she'll certainly attack. Man gets angry when he's provoked, doesn't he?"

"All right, how much milk does she give?"

"I can't say that exactly. But I can assure you, she'll give as much milk as she has."

The landlord was pleased with the owner's replies. He paid him a little more than what he asked for the cow, and led the animal and its calf home.



WORLD OF NATURE

Days are numbered— for tigers

Thanks to 'Project Tiger' launched by the Government two decades ago, the tiger population in India rose from 1,800 to over 4,300. They are located in 17 sanctuaries spread all over the country. But these sanctuaries have, of late, come under heavy poaching, resulting in the killing of several animals. However, such wanton killings are being reported from other countries in the sub-continent as well—like Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. The four countries, between them, have some 60 per cent of the world's tiger population of 7,000 to 8,000. Environmentalists gathered in Delhi for an international meet in December felt that unless something drastic is done, there may not be any tigers left—except in zoos—by the year 2020.

Threat to extinction

Along with the tiger, nearly 150 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, besides a large variety of insects, in India have been enlisted as endangered. At the top of the list are the lion, elephant, wild ass, rhinoceros, lion-tailed macaque, and the Indus dolphin. And all these species are spread throughout India—which indicate that depredations are not confined to specific regions. If people do not learn to live in harmony with nature, all these of our faunal friends will soon become extinct.

The end of impact theory

Did you know that there is an "impact theory" for the disappearance of dinosaurs from the earth? According to some scientists, there was a volcano eruption some 400,000 years ago, which dumped thousands of cubic kilometres of molten rock into the region in India now known as the Deccan, and this was the cause of the 'demise' of dinosaurs. Not long ago, other scientists were upon a 170-km-wide crater in Mexico, caused by the fall of a massive asteroid or comet. Chemical-dating of the rocks from the crater has helped them put out a new



theory that this space-smash that happened 65,000,000 years ago was the cause of the extinction of nearly 70 per cent of all animal species on earth at that time. Human unkindness seems to have now taken the place of volcanoes and space-smashes.

THE RING

—Asit Chandra Chandra and Abhijit Chandra Chandra



As a child, I had read how Sivaji, with a band of followers, attacked the Mughal camp one night and how General Shaista Khan had to flee, leaving his severed right thumb and the shattered Mughal prestige behind. From then, the seat of Sivaji, Pune, has had a fascination for me, though I never dreamt that one day, I would settle down there!

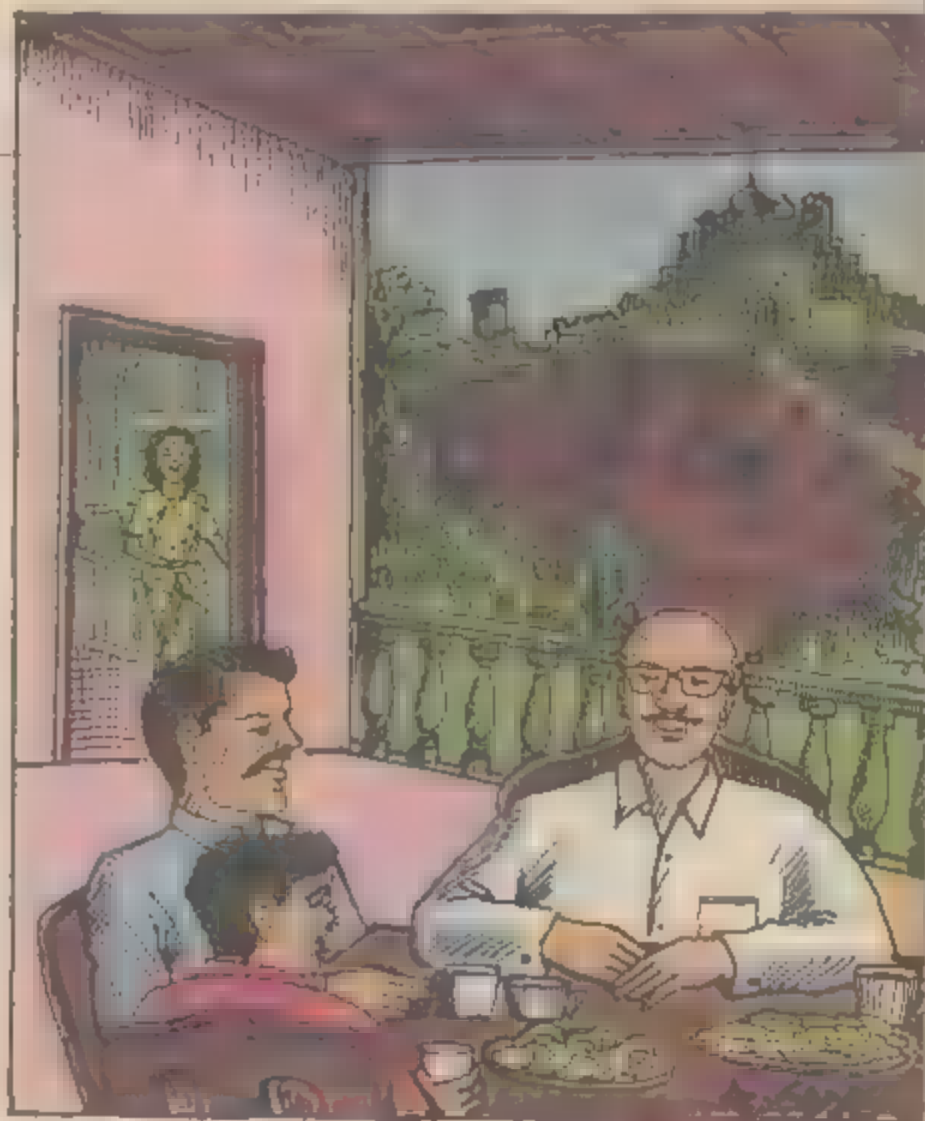
Our bungalow on the outskirts

of the town is surrounded by trees. I like the place, situated in the valley, between two hills. A few miles to the south, there is a row of hills. One hill soared into the sky, and crowning the top were the remains of the famous fort of Sinhagad. The renowned General of Sivaji, Tanaji Mal-sure, lost his life while capturing this fortress. The fort was named Sinhagad after this 'lion' of a general.

I met Dr. Sathe after I came to Pune. A short man, with a jovial disposition, he would visit my place, whenever he found time. With him would come Mrs. Sathe, with a basketful of delicacies. Our lively discussions made the evenings enjoyable. He was a great story-teller, keeping us spellbound with anecdotes and legends connected with the hill forts that dot the environs of Pune.

When the sky was overcast with dark clouds, the distant Sinhagad took a sombre hue against the dark grey sky. He would then talk about the fortress.

Sinhagad was once called Kondana. It was in the possession of the Mughal army. One evening, Jijabai saw lights in the fort of Kondana from her residence in Torna Fort. She sent for her illustrious son, Sivaji. How could he tolerate the enemy having their stronghold right next to Torna? She expressed her displeasure. Sivaji summoned his trusted friend, Tanaji Malsure, who was celebrating his son's wedding. He left the celebrations and hurried to his master. Then, on a night when Sinhagad was looking like a dark shadow on



the dark grey sky, Tanaji reached the foot of the hill. Taking only a few trusted followers, he climbed the hill from the precipitous side in the darkness of the night. How he entered the fort and conquered it had become a legend... Dr. Sathe ended his narration.

A few days later, he suddenly appeared. He seemed to be in a tearing hurry. "We're to attend an international conference in Paris. We've plans to tour the Continent afterwards, for a month. I've to talk to you, it's urgent." He took me near the window and took out a small box



from his pocket and pulled out a ring. It was quite heavy, and looked ancient. In the middle sparkled a big ruby, like the third eye of Lord Siva.

"Will you keep it for me till I come back?" he pleaded.

"It appears to be an antique. Where did you get it? Whose ring is this?" I enquired.

"I shall tell you all about it when I come back," he replied.

After he went away, I sat thinking: 'Where from would he have got it? Has it been stolen from somebody? It has a very ancient look. I hope it's not stolen

from any museum. I don't want to get entangled in a police case!'

The ring weighed about twenty grams. Nobody wore such a heavy ring those days. It fitted me in the middle finger. That showed the person to whom the ring belonged was of medium-build. Not much of expertise seemed to have gone into the making of the ring, but the red stone appeared to be a big size ruby of a very high quality. It looked like a drop of frozen blood. It would catch any eye. I opened my cupboard and put away the box with the ring in the locker.

I almost forgot about the ring, as I was busy with my daily routine. Dr. Sathe wasn't there to give me company. In the evenings I used to miss him.

One evening, I was on the terrace comfortably reclining in my armchair when I heard somebody climbing the stairs. I got up and leaned over the banister. I saw an aristocrat Maharashtrian gentleman of middle age coming up. I was astonished to see his dress. He was wearing a long coat with a broad belt over his churidar pyjama. He also wore a very old-fashioned headgear. He was

looking quite respectable, but it was difficult to believe that anybody wore such dress these days. I went to the top of the stairs to welcome him. But I was dumb struck with surprise. There was nobody on the stairs? 'Did I see anybody actually?' I asked myself. 'How could anybody come up without being noticed by others? My imagination must be playing a trick!'

The doubt, however, lingered in my mind. I had seen him very clearly. Whatever it was, I tried to get it out of my mind. I had almost forgotten it, when something more did take place.

I was reading the newspaper, one morning. In front of me was my morning cup of tea on a teapoy. Suddenly, there was some distraction, and my attention was diverted to the window. I was startled. It was the same Maratha gentleman. The robes and turban were unmistakable. 'Is he a bad character shadowing me? He must have some evil intentions.' I rushed outside. But I could not see anyone. 'He must have been hiding somewhere around,' I thought. I saw my son busy in the garden. I asked him,



"Did you see anyone around? A Maharashtrian gentleman in an old-fashioned dress?"

"No, papa, I didn't see anyone entering through the gate. Why? What happened?"

I avoided an answer and merely said, "It's nothing important. I thought I saw somebody in the garden."

I did not discuss the incident with anyone, but the doubt persisted in my mind. A couple of weeks elapsed after the incident. My wife and son were away in Calcutta attending a wedding, and I was alone in the house and



was feeling pretty bored. One night, I went to bed soon after dinner. Suddenly I woke up. There was a strong wind outside and the sky was criss-crossed by lightning. The curtains were dashing violently against the window-panes. It appeared there might be a heavy downpour. I got up to close the window. I was startled. The same man was standing near the window! The striking robe and the turban had already become familiar to me. But today he did not stir. I had an uncanny feeling that he was

waiting for me. Like someone under a spell, I opened the door and came out, and saw him slowly going out of the gate. I followed him like a man possessed. We moved across the road beyond the national highway and traversed the low hill. I did not know where we were heading to. But I followed him as if I was hypnotized. I had no idea how long we had walked. After we crossed the low hills, we found two horses tied near a tree. The man climbed one horse and beckoned me to the other.

—To Conclude

A book tight and full is but a block of paper.

A gem is not polished without rubbing, nor is a man perfected without trials.

CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-52

AND ART OF INDIA

The Majestic Elephant



More than the trunkloads of books, toys, and other gifts they receive, what the children who win the National Bravery Awards every year eagerly look forward to is their ride on decorated elephants at the head of the Republic

Day Parade. Some of the awardees will recall the famous Dasara processions in Mysore and Jaipur, where the respective Maharajahs rode on caparisoned elephants, who lent grandeur to the spectacle. Perhaps more spectacular is the annual 'Poomam' festival in Trichur, Kerala, when over 40 elephants, glittering in their golden adornments and mounted by men holding colourful fans and umbrellas are arrayed on either side of the huge maidan in front of the Siva temple. In some temples in South India, it is the privilege of elephants to take the idols in procession morning and evening.

Strangely, this largest among the land animals in the world is easily tamed and put to various uses. Indian history tells us of the elephant brigade in King Porus's army that faced the Greeks under Alexander the Great. Chandra-gupta Maurya had 10,000 elephants in

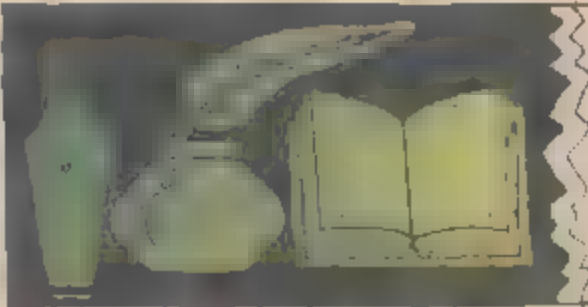
his army. In olden times, Maharajahs rode on elephants to play polo—a game born in India. Elephant races, like camel races, are popular even now in certain parts of India. Of course, these animals are also made to carry heavy logs in forests.

Elephants are also used for taming wild elephants after they are caught.

The average elephant is 3m tall and will weigh between 4,000 and 5,000 kg. The 1.40m long trunk is flexible but very strong. It is the animal's trunk with which it sucks water before emptying it into its mouth. The trunk can pick up even small items—like a coin. Most of the male animals have a pair of tusks, which are much valued by man and therefore, have made these animals an endangered species. Wild elephants move only in herds; then they feel more secure.

Compared to their huge size, their eyes are tiny organs. However, their sense of smell and hearing is well developed. A calf is born after 22 months of gestation. Elephants are intelligent animals, with a legendary sharp memory.

The Indian elephant is smaller than its African relation, in size.



INDIA THROUGH HER LITERATURE

India is a great country which has nurtured so many languages and so many cultures through the ages. Each major language of India has a rich literature. We know more or less about the great books of the past. But we know little about the outstanding books of our own times. In these pages, **Chandamama** will tell you the stories of the novels of our age, written in different Indian languages. The narration will be very brief, but we hope, this will inspire our readers to read the full book in original or in translation in the future.

—Editor

THE GOLDEN FLOWER

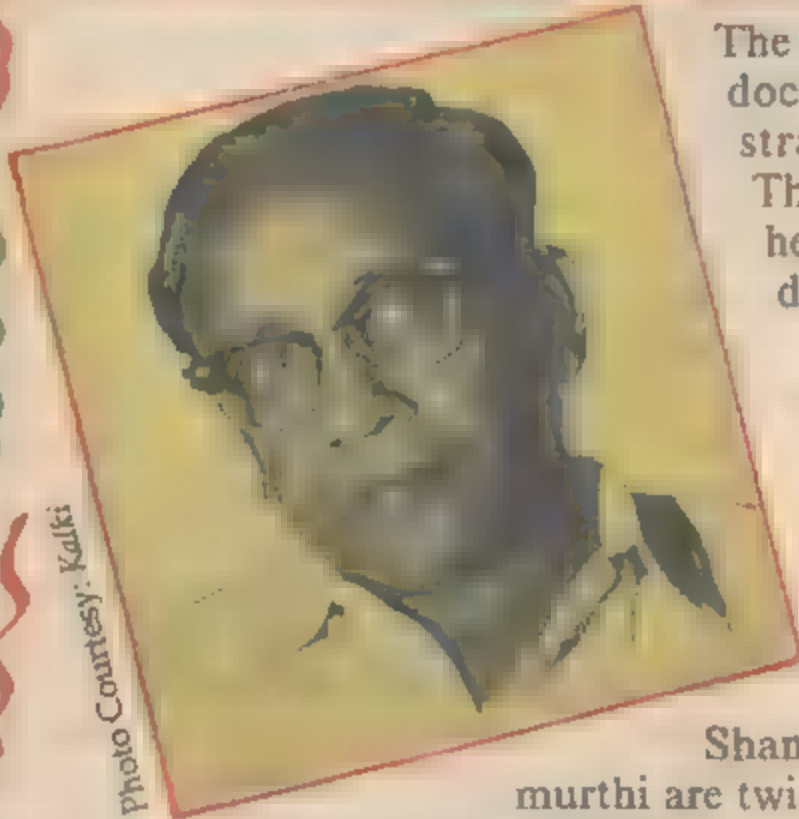


Photo Courtesy: Kalki

The young, beautiful Shankari, a skilled doctor in a nursing home in Madras, has a strange sensation when she looks at Thirumurthi who has brought his wife to her. Under Shankari's care, she has a safe delivery.

But what has caused Shankari that strange feeling at Thirumurthi's sight? That concerns her past. A young man named Gurumurthi, who looked exactly like Thirumurthi and secretly married her, had quietly slipped away from her life. No wonder

Thirumurthi looks like him, for, as Shankari finds out, Thirumurthi and Gurumurthi are twins. She also finds out that Gurumurthi is no more. Neither Thirumurthi nor his wife, of course, has any idea about Shankari's relation with Gurumurthi. They are grateful to her for her service to them. The wealthy Thirumurthi heaps presents on her.

But is Thirumurthi really grateful? Far from that. He is only enamoured of her, and likes to marry her!

Marry her when he has a wife? Well, soon Shankari gets to know more and more about the dark world of Thirumurthi where all that matters is money, which he has a fat lot, earned through corrupt means. He thinks he can be happy with



money; he can 'buy' anybody with money; with money he can destroy whosoever stands in his way!

He wants Shankari to kill, under the pretext of medical treatment, an innocent, unfortunate young lady, Kumuda, who he has secretly married, but who is no longer wanted by him. He believes that Shankari has obliged him, for Kumuda suddenly disappears.

Soon, another person appears on the scene. He is Thirugnanam, ■ childhood friend of Shankari, who had been extremely helpful to her when she was ■ little orphan girl. Shankari lets him pass as her brother and finds for him ■ job in Thirumurthi's establishment.

But Thirumurthi cannot be expected to go on obliging Shankari forever. One day, he sacks Thirugnanam, only because Shankari has finally refused to marry him.

Thirugnanam laughs, for he is a detective who has been probing the nefarious deeds of Thirumurthi. He has found enough evidence to book the cruel, corrupt fellow who has ruined so many others.

A frustrated Thirumurthi tries to kill Shankari and Thirugnanam. One night, his henchman drives a car at a terrific speed to smash Shankari's car. But it takes ■ abrupt turn, causing the henchman's car to dash against a tree.

Thirumurthi is arrested. It is also revealed that Kumuda is safe under Shankari's care.

Thirugnanam would like to marry Shankari. But Shan' ari knows that while he was working for Thirumurthi, the latter's sister, Rajeswari, had fallen in love with him.

Shankari's life is dedicated to the service of the poor. She must not stand in the way of Rajeswari getting the object of her adoration. Shankari ■ thus a flower of gold or *pon malar*.

Pon Malar by P.V. Akilandam, popularly known ■ Akilan (1922-1988) is a popular and powerful novel in Tamil which exposes the murky world of the wealthy pleasure-seekers on the one hand and creates a forceful character, Shankari, on the other. Akilan ■ recipient of the Sahitya Akadami Award as well as the Jnanapith Award.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. What is 'bonsai'?
2. Which king established the Saka era?
3. Which country covers ■■■ entire continent?
4. What was the ■■■■■ of the first ever *ashram* founded by Gandhiji?
5. Which country has the oldest national anthem?
6. The weavers of Kancheepuram have a specific name. What is it?
7. One country in the world has no movie theatres! Which country?
8. Where did the Buddha attain Nirvana?
9. Which is the largest organ in human body?
10. Which capital city is located on the bank of river Gomati, in north India?
11. Who is called the father of modern Italy?
12. Who designed the Viceroy's House (now called Rashtrapati Bhavan) in Delhi?
13. Which country issued postage stamps for the first time?
14. When did the Indian National Congress celebrate its centenary?
15. How many countries participated in the first modern Olympics held in Athens in 1896?

ANSWERS

1. *Bonsai* is a miniature but fullgrown tree in a pot. This art originated in Japan and is now a popular hobby.
2. The Saka era was established by Emperor Kanishka to mark his succession to throne in A.D. 78. The calendar based on the Saka era is still in use in India.
3. Australia.
4. The Phoenix Farm, near Durban, in South Africa, ■■■ established in 1904. Gandhiji and his friends lived there and worked by their own labour. Six years later, he founded a similar colony near Johannesburg. It was called Tolstoy Farm.
5. The "Kimiyago" of Japan was composed in the 9th century A.D.
6. Salgar. The word *salgar* derives from *salika* (weaver, in Sanskrit). The *salgars* are believed to be descendants of sage Markandeya, who wove dresses for the gods.
7. Saudi Arabia
8. Kushi Nagar
9. Liver
10. Lucknow
11. Garibaldi
12. Sir Edwin Lutyens
13. Great Britain
14. 1985
15. Nine

THE ULTIMATE WAY



Long, long ago there lived two friends, one rich and the other poor. They were neighbours in a small hamlet beside the forest.

It ■■■ ■ sunny day and they went out for ■ pleasant stroll together. Soon they fell into a serious discussion.

"Life is full of misery, yet I think, to do good is better than to do evil," said the poor man.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the rich friend. "Absurd! The world is

full of vice and evil. To follow the path of good will lead you nowhere."

But the poor man stood firmly by his statement.

"All right, then let's lay a wager," proposed the other. "We'll ask their opinion of the first people we meet. If they say you're right, then all my belongings will be yours. In ■■■ they support my view, then everything you have will be mine."

The poor man agreed to the



wager.

Soon they met a hefty man with a long moustache. He had a knife dangling from his waist-belt.

"Friend," they said, coming up to him, "we came to ask you something."

"Very well," the stranger was curious.

"Which way do you prosper—through doing good or doing evil?" the friends asked.

"Once upon a time, I was a hard-working, honest farmer. But alas, my master fleeced me of most of my earnings. Then I left

him and turned into a highway man. Today I'm wealthy and happy. You may draw your conclusion," said the stranger.

"Do you see how right I was in my views?" asked the rich man.

The poor man became sad. But there was nothing he could do, and they continued on their way. After a while, they came across a merchant leading a donkey loaded with goods.

"Good day, O honest merchant!" they greeted.

"Good day to you!" replied the merchant with a little bow.

"May we have your opinion on a certain subject?" they asked.

"Please be free and tell me what it is you want to know!" said the traveller.

"Good or evil—which do you think is the better way to live?"

"Dear fellows, doing good doesn't pay. Can you imagine how much I've to lie and cheat in order to sell my products? It's a pity, but there's no selling otherwise! I'm sorry, but I've to be dishonest to earn my daily bread. Such are the ways of the world," he said and continued on his journey.

"I've proved right once

again!" exclaimed the rich man jubilantly.

His poor friend's spirits fell. What could he do but to keep silent?

They walked on and soon met a rider who looked learned and noble.

"Salutations, Your Lordship," they greeted. "Tarry awhile. May we have your wise opinion on an important matter?"

"Why not? Go ahead," responded the stranger, pulling the reins of his horse.

"To tread the path of good or evil—which according to your learned self is a better way of life?" they asked.

"Ah! Ah! My friends, to tell you frankly, there's no success through straight and honest means. If I were to follow strictly the ways of the good and the righteous, could I ever have risen to ..." the noble man did not complete what he wanted to say and sped away.

"Now, you've lost the bet and must turn over all your belongings to me," said the rich friend, with a victorious grin.

They trudged homewards in silence. One smiling all the way



and the other, morose and lost in deep thought. So, the poor man gave away all his humble belongings to his rich friend, except his thatched shelter.

"You may stay there while you look for another place to move in," suggested the rich man.

Some days passed. One day, the poor man's hut was without a morsel of food and his children began to cry of hunger. He went to his rich neighbour's house and begged for a sack of grains and a loaf of bread.

"I'll give you what you want, only in exchange for one of your



eyes," he replied.

It was a choice between his eye and feeding his famished children. He chose the latter and returned home with some food but half blind.

After a week, the provisions ran out and the children were hungry once again. So he sought the help of his rich friend. He agreed to do so, provided he let him put out his other eye, too.

"Don't do such a thing, my friend! How can I live with both my eyes gone? Have mercy on me, friend," he implored.

But the rich man was adamant.

The poor one had no choice but to forfeit his remaining eye.

With the sack of flour hung over his shoulder, the poor blind man groped his way home, with great difficulty. His wife was stunned and she began to weep.

"Don't you worry, dear," he consoled her. "I'm not the only blind man in the world! There are many. But they manage to live, after all!"

Before long they were left with no food at all.

"I'll not go to my friend for help this time. Take me instead to the great Oak on the way to the shrine and in the evening come and fetch me home. Many people pass that way and some of them surely understand my woes," he told his wife in the morning.

So under the great Oak he sat and the kind-hearted ones among the passers-by gave him a coin or two and pieces of bread.

Evening came, but his wife did not turn up. It was a desolate place, close to the forest. The blind man was impatient to get home and decided to do so all by himself. Suddenly, he heard the howling of jackals and the hooting of owls and knew that he had

taken the wrong direction and was in the woods. He climbed a tree and sat on one of its topmost branches, for fear of wild animals that prowl at night. He prayed silently.

All was quiet. The wind blew and the leaves rustled. Midnight struck and there came flying through the darkness a host of evil spirits to the spot under the same tree. They had all pointed nose, horn-like ears on their head, long fingers and little wings. One of them wore a black satin jacket and round glasses on his eyes. His manners showed that he was their chief.

"I've managed to blind a friend

for some measures of grains and flour," said one.

"You've done well, but not very well," said the chief.

"Why not?"

"For the blind man can see again by rubbing his eyes with the dew on the leaves of this tree, if by chance he comes to know of this remedy," said the leader.

He then questioned the next dark spirit on his deeds.

"I've turned all the wells in the nearby village—even the ponds and the lakes—dry! The people would soon begin to die of thirst. Ha! Ha!"

"You've indeed done well, but not well enough. For if the mossy





rock that lies at the foot of the hill to the east of the village is removed, a stream of sweet water will gush forth and quench the thirst of all." replied the chief. He then focused his gaze on the third member of his circle: "What did you accomplish?"

"I've succeeded in blinding the beautiful princess. All the great doctors have failed to bring back her sight," he replied.

"You've done well, but not fully so. For the dew on the leaves of this tree can restore her sight too!"

The poor blind man on the tree heard the conversation, most

attentively indeed. When the spirits departed, he rubbed his eyes with the dew on the leaves, and lo, he could see once again. But he did not forget to gather some of the magic dew in a small earthen vessel he found on the road, before he set off on his way.

He reached the arid village. With the people's help he rolled the enchanted rock. Lo and behold, there gushed forth a spring with the sweetest water and filled the wells, ponds, and lakes, full and deep. The grateful villagers showered their saviour with much wealth.

The happy man now galloped to the capital. Presenting himself before the king he said, "Your Majesty, please give me the opportunity to cure your daughter of her blindness."

"All my best physicians have failed to restore her sight. How can you do it?" asked the king, rather surprised. However, he had no objection to giving him a trial.

The man was led into the chamber where the princess lay on her bed. He rubbed her eyes with the magic dew and she could see again.

The king's joy knew no

bounds. He rewarded the poor man with precious gifts he had never even dreamt before!

He returned home in the royal carriage. While his grieving wife was beginning to think that he was dead, she heard a gentle knock on the door. She opened it and who else should she find but her husband—and with his eyes wide open? The man recounted his adventures to his speechless wife and children.

The rich neighbour called on them and marvelled at their sudden turn of fortune. "How did it all happen?" he asked.

The friend told him all that had passed from beginning to the end.

The rich man felt amazed. He nodded wisely.

At nightfall the wealthy friend stole into the forest and climbed

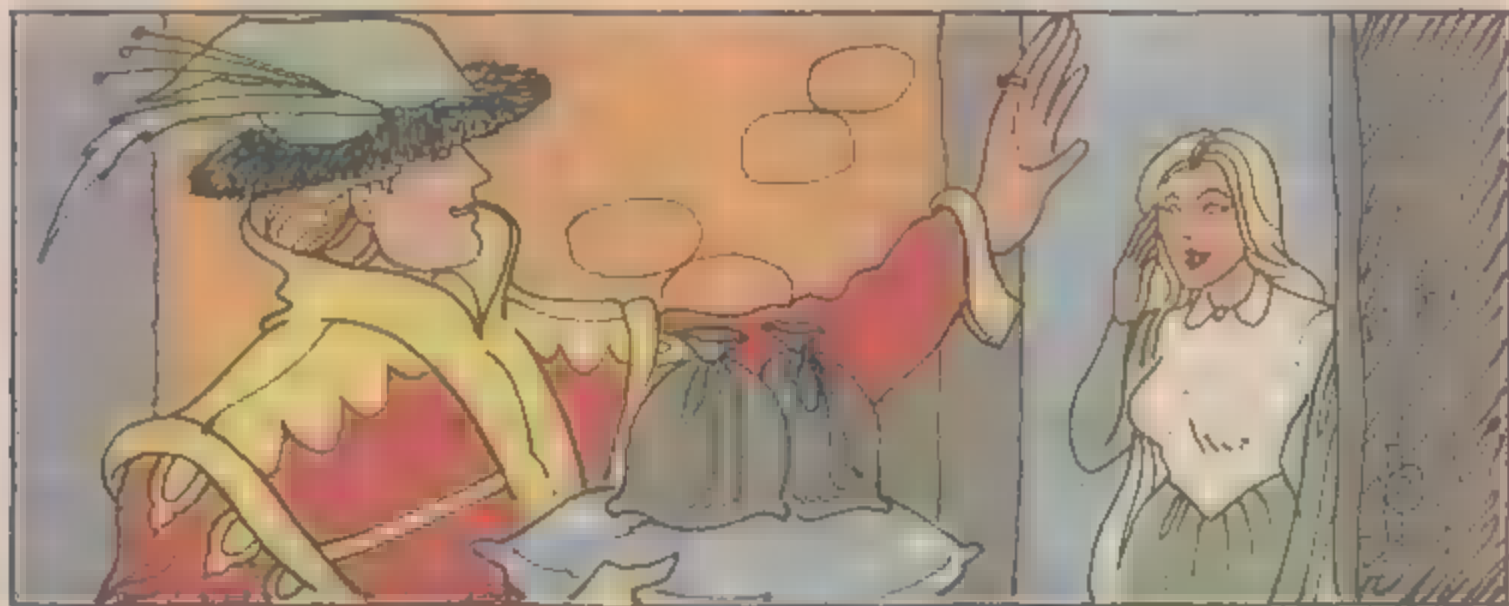
the same tree in the middle of the night, with the dark spirits gathered under it.

"What's this mystery?" asked the leader. "That blind chap can see, the village abounds in water, and the princess has regained her sight! Is some fellow listening to us from his hiding?"

They began searching the tree. Discovering the rich man, they thrashed him mercilessly and hurled him down. He limped back home, never to be able to walk straight.

One day, he visited his neighbour. "Now I agree with you, dear friend. To tread the path of good is a better way of life than that of evil. Forgive me my stupidity and cruelty," he said and shook his friend's hands warmly.

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das





Sumo goes International

Sumo is a form of wrestling that had its origin in Japan and has a 2,000-year history. ■ is ■ popular sport in that country. In recent years, however, it had caught the fancy of wrestlers in other countries, ■ much so Japan ■ prompted ■ organise the first ■ Sumo Tournament in Tokyo in December. The participants are generally described as "blubbery behemoths" in reference to their size and rather fleshy appearance.

Some 70 odd amateur wrestlers from 25 countries assembled in the clay ring of Ryogoku Kokugikan, which is the most revered shrine of Sumo. Japan, faced ■ tough fight before clinching victory; the U.S. team ■ placed second, while France and Mongolia ■ third.

Every Rikishi (wrestler) has to have a 'fighting name'—like Yamato (George Kalima), Konishiki (Salevaa Atisano) and Akepono (Chad Rowan)—all from Hawai, U.S.A. They weighed 240 kg, 263 kg and 197 kg respectively. The latter two ■ declared Ozeki (champion). The position of Yokozuna (grand champion) is right now without a holder.



In the fight, one tries to force the other down, or to send him out of the ring, using ■ variety of 'holds' or just brute strength. This also calls for agility, stamina, and good coordination of body and mind. Sumo is not fighting alone. It demands good ■ and courtesy, which ■ essential parts of the spirit ■ sumo.

The traditional wear for ■ is only a flimsy loin cloth called Mawashi. These days some ■ put on underpants. On their bare chest neck-down, there will ■ of fiery fish and dragons. Watch out for

these when you see ■ sumo bout next on your TV.

Anand now No.3

India's 23-year-old (they call him ■ *cherub*!) Viswanathan Anand has reached the Number 3 rank in World Chess, in the latest ELO ratings, in which he crossed the 2,700 barrier with 2,710 marks. He is placed behind Bobby Fischer, who did not play a

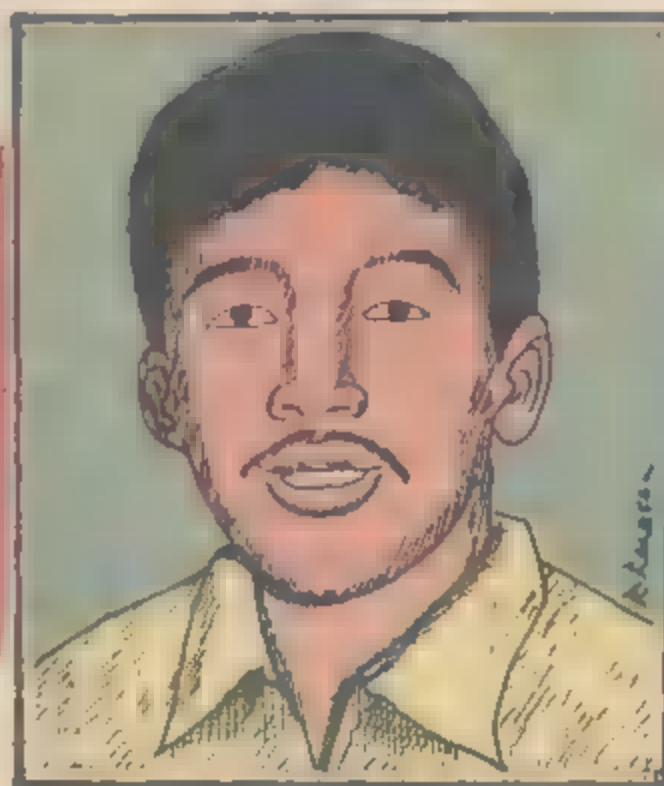


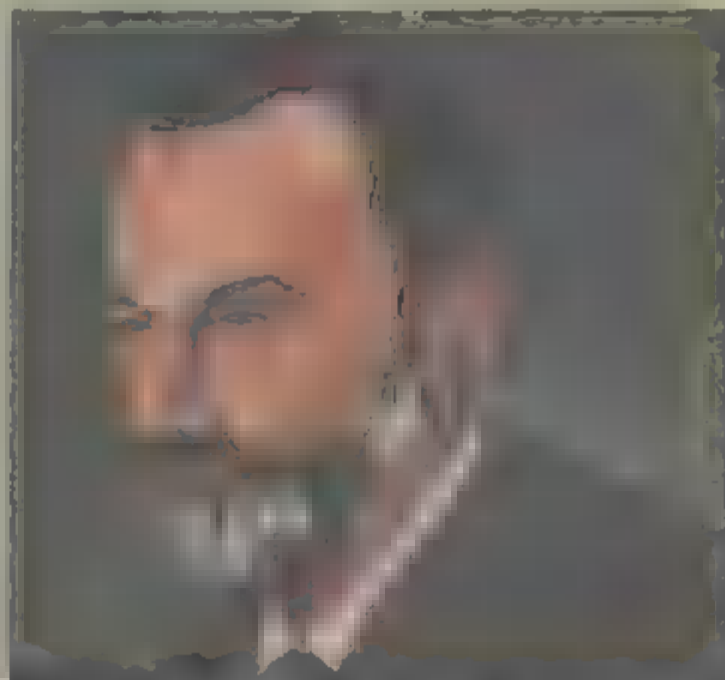
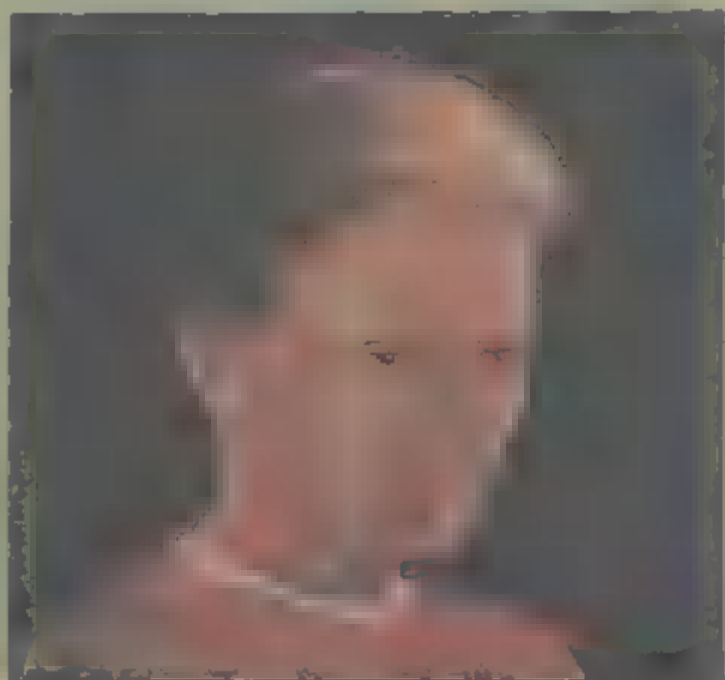
single game for ■ years till he took on Boris Spassky last year to win the world title, and Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov, Vassily Ivanchuk, Boris Gelfand, and Shirov—all given No. 2 position. Anand is due ■ play in the Linares Tournament this month. Someone asked him, "How about playing Fischer?" "Why not?" he responded, without batting an eyelid, ■ recalled ■ when Fischer beat Spassky for the world title the previous time, he (Anand) ■ only three

years old. "But I grew up admiring his genius." Someone should now ask Bobby Fischer whether he would play the greatest Indian player of all time!

Malaysia's millionaire

Rashid Sidek was the star of Malaysia's victorious 1992 Thomas Cup team. This Number One shuttler has now become world badminton's highest paid player and Malaysia's first millionaire sportsman. This follows the U.S. ■ 600,000 contract he has signed with Carlton, the U.S. sports gear manufacturer. He would be paid ■ 150,000 annually for four years, besides ■ bonus totalling ■ 100,000 if he excels in all the major tournaments. The two players who ■ anywhere ■ him are Indonesia's Liem Swie King (\$120,000 ■ year) and the Danish legend Morten Frost (\$100,000 annually).





FROM THE OF THE GREAT

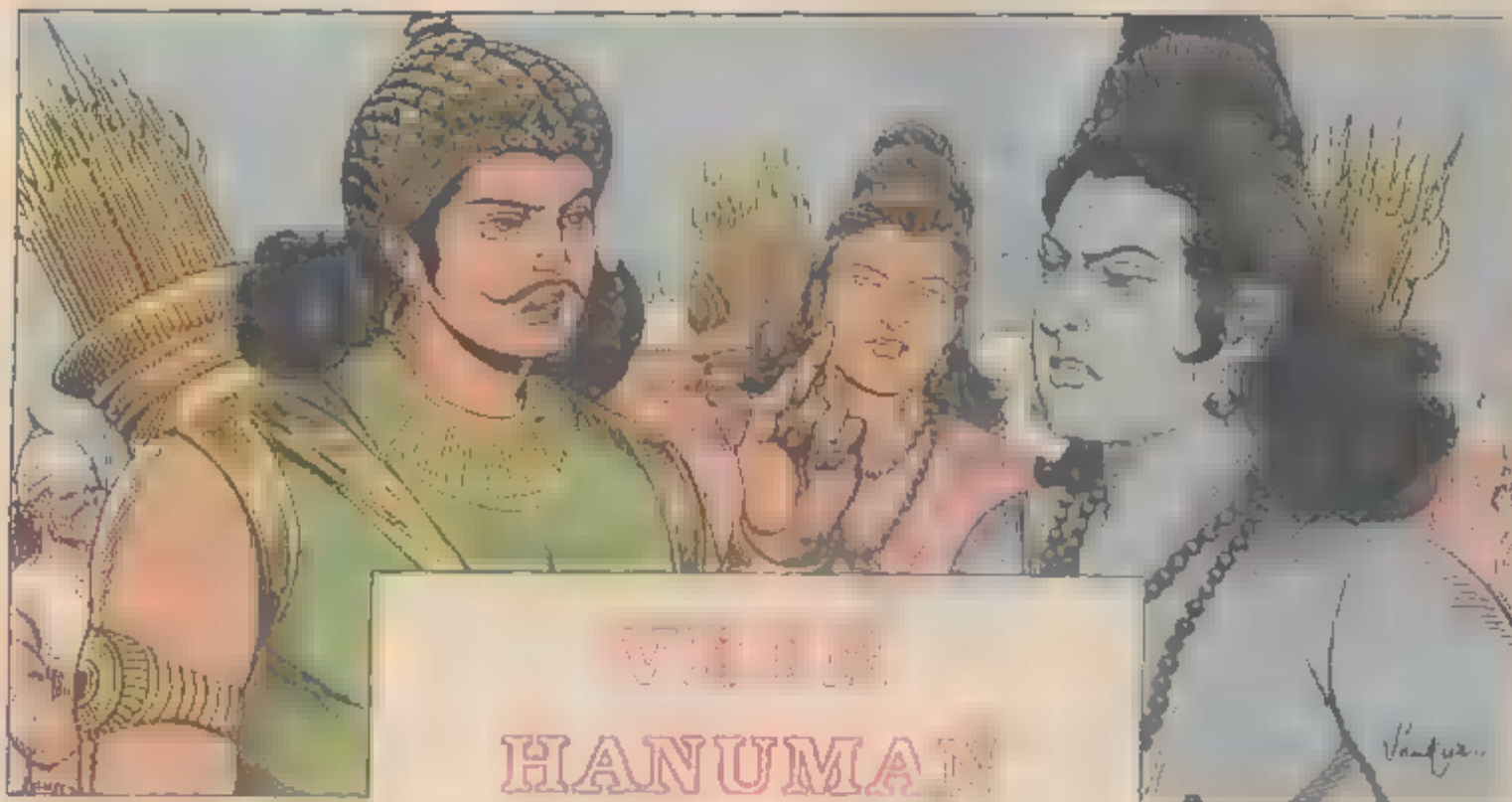
A "No" to Riches

Who would not have heard the names Pierre Curie and Marie Curie? They discovered ■ new element, radium, which is being put to several uses, including Xray. The husband and wife were pursuing different areas of research, and it was Marie who first came across ■ radioactive property. Pierre then set aside his own research in magnetism, to help her isolate the element.

Within ■ month, in 1898, they succeeded in their effort and called the element 'Polonium'—Marie was of Polish origin, while Pierre was a Frenchman. They were actually looking for a more powerful substance—which they came upon towards the end of that year. They called it radium, but it took another four years for them to prove its existence, when Marie prepared one-tenth gram of pure radium.

By then poverty had overtaken them. Still they refused job offers from Universities. Pierre took tuitions for children, to keep body and soul together. A French industrialist bought the process and started producing radium for commercial use. Friends advised the Curie couple to patent their discovery, which then would have brought riches for them. But they refused. "Radium belongs to the world," they declared. "No one has any right to profit from it" —only benefit from it, ■ the world has subsequently seen. The couple was awarded the Nobel prize for physics in 1903. Marie won the Nobel prize for chemistry in 1911—the only Nobel laureate to win the prize twice.

Did you know that Marie Curie was the first known victim of radiation? She died of Lukemia in July 1934, in the service of mankind.



HANUMAN

29

(Though Rama and Lakshmana fall unconscious when they are hit by the arrows sent by Indrajit, they wake up with the help of the medicinal plants brought by Hanuman from the Himalayas. Indrajit now resorts to all sorts of magic, tricks and deceit. He brings a woman looking like Sita and kills her in his chariot. It is only Vibhishana who sees through his nephew's game. He reassures Rama and Lakshmana that Sita is alive.)

Both Rama and Lakshmana were greatly relieved when they heard from Vibhishana that the woman killed by Indrajit was only a fake Sita. "You shouldn't be unduly worried," Vibhishana tried to comfort the brothers. "If the enemy were to see you down-cast, they'll only rejoice and take advantage of the situation.

Nothing would have happened to Devi Sita. You've come here to annihilate the Rakshasas and retrieve Sita. You must achieve that aim. Let's send Lakshmana to Nikumbala, where Indrajit is holding the yaga. He should be prevented from acquiring more powers. Only then will we be able to kill Indrajit. And once he is no

THE END OF INDRAJIT



more, that'll be the end of Ravana, too."

Rama agreed to the suggestion and sent Lakshmana to the mountain-side. He was accompanied by Vibhishana, Hanuman, and some Vanara soldiers. When they reached Nikumbala, they saw the mountain being guarded by Rakshasa soldiers. "The only way to distract Indrajit from the *yaga* is to attack the Rakshasa army," said Vibhishana. "He'll then make his appearance and that'll be an opportunity to kill him," he told Lakshmana.

The two armies clashed in a fierce fight in which several Rakshasa soldiers were killed. The remaining soldiers left the scene. Their shouts and cries told Indrajit that his army had suffered sudden defeat. He left the *yaga* and came out, only to see that the Vanara army had followed him to Nikumbala. He became furious. He got into his chariot and rode out to face the Vanara army.

Meanwhile, Lakshmana and Vibhishana had reached the venue of the *yaga*. It was a dense forest. In the centre was a huge tree beneath which the *yaga* was taking place. Vibhishana advised Lakshmana to meet Indrajit in combat at the same place.

When Indrajit reached there, Lakshmana shouted, "Where did you disappear half-way through the fight? Were you afraid of meeting us face to face? If you're courageous enough, come on, accept our challenge."

Indrajit stared at Lakshmana, without replying him. He then saw Vibhishana. "Uncle! You belong to the Rakshasa dynasty. It's a pity you don't have any sympathy for them. Instead,

you've gone and joined Rama and Lakshmana, whom you hadn't known earlier. My father is your elder brother and you know well how much confidence he had reposed in you. In spite of all these, do you want to side with them, to attack and kill me? Even our distant relations are supporting us and fighting for my father's aim in life. Is it, therefore, fair for you to have joined our enemy? To help them disturb my *yaga*?"

"Indrajit! You know my character very well," responded Vibhishana. "What I always wish for is peace. I'll also fight injustice

wherever it prevails. My brother had all along been unfair. I found him opposing righteousness, and so I advised him many a time, but I had the misfortune of seeing him reject all that advice. Tell me, has your father done anything that can be called good deeds? All that has now led to the destruction of the entire Rakshasa race and his own end. What about you? Didn't you cheat Rama and Lakshmana and the Vanaras by killing a fake Sita? And still you wish to call me a traitor! They've seen through your game, Indrajit, and it'll be better now for you to surrender





to Lakshmana's arrow."

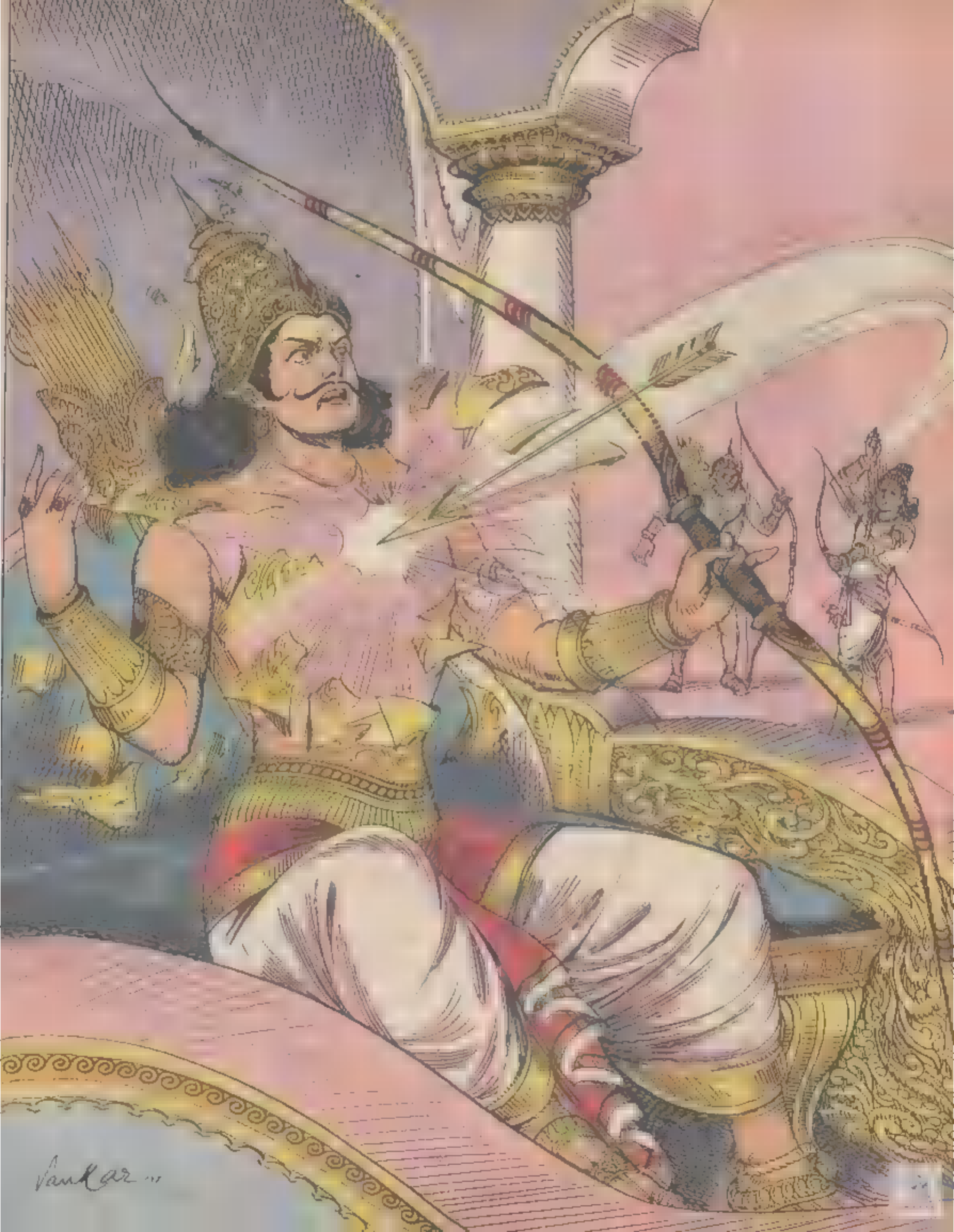
Indrajit now turned his ire on Lakshmana. "Do you know with whom you're fighting? Remember, that day you became unconscious when my arrow hit you. But somehow you escaped at that time. Don't be so sure that you'll escape a second time!"

To which Lakshmana retorted: "Indrajit, earlier you stealthily left the battlefield like a thief! You didn't want to fight with us face to face. You got away by indulging in deceit and tricks. And you call all that bravery and might!"

Before Lakshmana could complete his peroration, Indrajit shot arrows after arrows at Lakshmana. Some of them hit him and hurt him. From the injuries, blood began oozing. Lakshmana was so enraged that he fought with redoubled enthusiasm and intent. Their fight became fierce. Indrajit was really shaken. Vibhishana then alerted Lakshmana. "It's very clear that Indrajit has tired himself. You should take advantage of this situation and put an end to him."

Lakshmana's powerful arrows felled Indrajit, who became unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he saw before him Lakshmana all smiles. So he was very angry. He sent arrows aimed at both Lakshmana and Vibhishana. Lakshmana deflected all the arrows. "If this is your prowess, Indrajit," called out Lakshmana, "wait till you experience my might!"

The mighty arrows that went from Lakshmana's bow were enough to pierce the armour worn by Indrajit. It was smashed to smithereens, and some pieces even hit Indrajit on his head, face, and other parts of the body.



Sankar...



Indrajit, who had till then not been defeated by anybody was now finding it difficult to face every one of Lakshmana's arrows. His hands itched to wreak vengeance on Lakshmana who had destroyed his armour. The two fought tirelessly. The armies on both sides looked aghast at their fight. Neither of them felt any tiredness and fought in expectation of ultimate success.

Vibhishana now thought that he should encourage the Vanara soldiers to emulate Lakshmana in fighting the Rakshasas. "In this war, Ravana's only hope is

his son, Indrajit," he addressed the Vanara soldiers. "The might of the Rakshasa army depends entirely on Indrajit's success. We should not allow Indrajit to remain alive any longer. Lakshmana is now bent on ensuring his end. You must all go to his help by attacking the Rakshasas and thus prevent their support reaching Indrajit. If he dies, then it will be as good as cutting Ravana's right hand. He might then accept defeat. Unfortunately, as Indrajit is like my own son, I can't attack him."

The Vanara soldiers were now enthused to carry on the fight. They approached the Rakshasa army with vigour, while Vibhishana and his four advisers led the attack. Almost the same time, Lakshmana's arrow beheaded Indrajit's charioteer. Indrajit then took over and he had to ride the chariot and fight Lakshmana at the same time. He was overwhelmed at the might of Lakshmana. Till now Indrajit was full of pride that there was none in the world to match him in fight. That arrogance now lay shattered.

When the Vanaras saw Indrajit

growing weak, they cheered Lakshmana. Four of them, called Pramadi, Sarada, Rapasa, and Kandamadana, attacked Indrajit's chariot and managed to kill all the four horses, forcing Indrajit to step down on the ground to carry on the fight. Some Rakshasa soldiers encircled him to give him protection.

Indrajit asked them to take on the Vanara soldiers. "While you engage them, I shall go and come back with another chariot." He went into the city and soon came back riding on another chariot. His sudden appearance in a fresh chariot surprised Lakshmana and Vibhishana.

Indrajit now aimed his arrows at the Vanara soldiers, killing many of them. Lakshmana shot an arrow which broke Indrajit's bow into pieces. Vibhishana attacked the horses tied to his chariot and killed them. Lakshmana now took out his special arrow chanting the *mantra* of Lord Indra and aimed it at Indrajit. The arrow went and beheaded Indrajit. The Vanara soldiers were overjoyed. They felt that they had at last won the war.



The Rakshasas retreated. Ravana was shocked beyond words. He fell into a swoon. When he regained consciousness, he angrily shouted, "All this has happened because of that single woman, Sita. I'm going to kill her now! That's the only way I can take revenge on them. She was responsible for my son's death."

On hearing his decision, Ravana's queen, Mandodari, went to him pleading, "At least now, you must send back Sita, my lord! Do you still wish more of our people to meet with their doom because of her?"



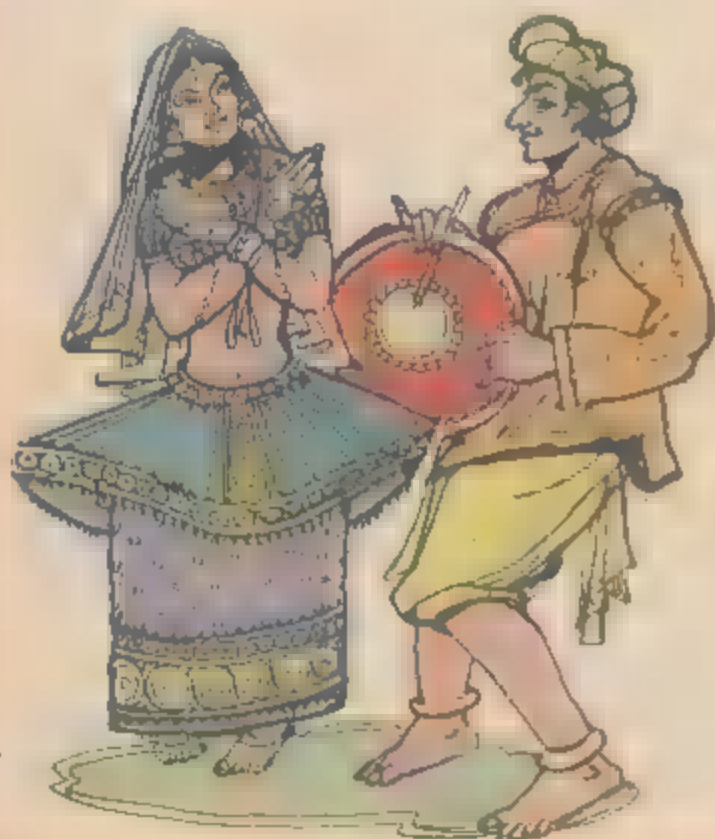
Ravana's ministers also advised him against killing Sita. "Instead, you should meet Rama and Lakshmana face to face. If you were to kill Sita, then our very aim of fighting this war will

come to nought."

Ravana saw some wisdom in what they said and arranged for a yaga before he went for a fight.

—To continue

✿ WONDER WITH COLOURS ✿



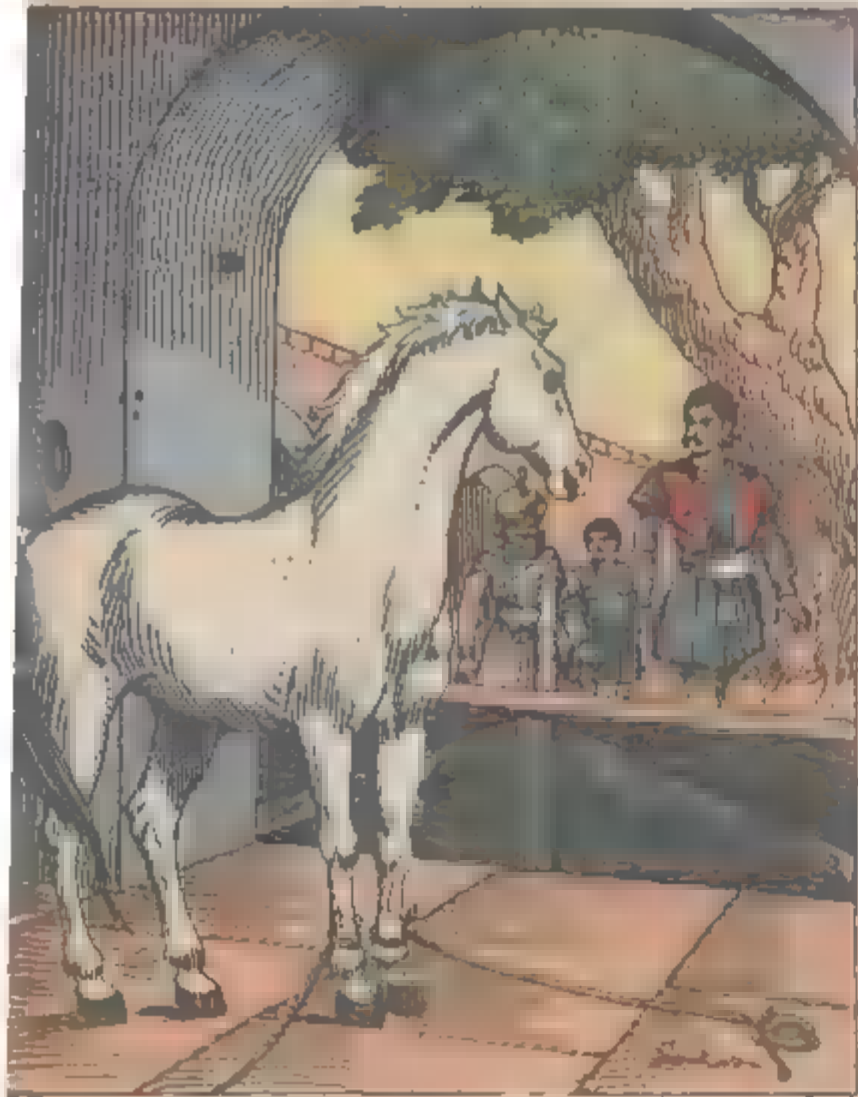


New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

The Bodyguard

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, you seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying a comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. I've a doubt whether you're not expecting a reward for your efforts. But it may elude



you. Some people may be rewarded for their cleverness and bravado. Some others may even lose a reward. Do you know what happened to Veermalla? Come on, listen to his story." He then began his narration.

Once, Kalinga was ruled by Kanakvarma. He was always accompanied by his bodyguard. Veermalla was not only a strong man; he had a good physique. He was clever and capable, too. There was none in the kingdom to match him in the use of the bow and arrow and other weapons, or in wrestling and similar

contests. He was ever ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the king. Kanakvarma was very fond of him.

Kanakangi was his only daughter. The king had no son. She soon reached the marriageable age. Kanakvarma was keen that he found a suitable son-in-law, so that he could hand over the reins of the kingdom and take rest. So, he got busy searching for a bridegroom for Kanakangi. He was unaware that his daughter and his bodyguard were in love with each other.

That was the time when the Prince of Bengal, Vamasen, started on a visit to the neighbouring countries. One day, he arrived in the capital of Kalinga, where the king received him with due courtesies. Suddenly it occurred to him that Prince Vamasen would be an ideal husband to Kanakangi. He, therefore, ensured that the prince stayed in all comfort. Vamasen appreciated the king's gesture and thoroughly enjoyed his hospitality.

One day, the king invited Vamasen to go with him to see his stable of horses and elephants.

There, the prince saw a handsome white horse and took a fancy to ride on it. He revealed his desire to Kanakvarma. "I bought it only last week. It has not yet been tamed," said the king. "It may take a few more days to train the horse. In fact, only my bodyguard, Veermalla, has so far attempted riding on it. Shall I give you another horse to ride?"

Prince Vamasen did not quite relish the suggestion. He was seen looking at the white horse intently. "If you are so keen to ride on it," said Veermalla, "I shall accompany you."

Vamasen took it as an affront. Should he need a bodyguard? Was he being taken for a coward? Should he allow anybody to belittle him? "I don't need your service!" he snubbed Veermalla angrily. "Keep all your bravery to yourself. I know how to take care of myself." He untied the horse and jumped on to it. The next moment, the animal was off like a wind. Vamasen tried his level best to halt the horse, but he failed. The horse jumped over a pile of stones, flung the rider to the ground, and was away. Vam-



asen sustained injuries on his head and all over the body.

The king's soldiers picked up Prince Vamasen and rushed to the palace where physicians were called in to give the best treatment to the prince. Kanakvarma regretted that the mishap was caused by one of his horses. After a few days of medication and rest, Prince Vamasen recovered, though he was unable to walk properly. He was angry as well as bitter. He did not succeed in controlling the horse; neither had he been able to show the king and the princess that he was stronger



than Veermalla. He decided then and there to take the first opportunity to challenge Veermalla and prove his ability to Kanakvarma and Kanakangi.

One evening, the king called on Vamasen. His blood boiled when he saw Veermalla along with the king. "Veermalla, everybody is praising your prowess. Would you like to match that with my strength? Sword fight? Wrestling? You can choose whatever you like. And if you were to defeat me, I shall accept your superiority. How about a fight?"

Kankvarma was perturbed.

Vamasen was still to recover completely. How then could he fight with Veermalla? The body-guard, however, understood what was troubling Vamasen. It was nothing but jealousy. "Your highness! There's no doubt you're strong and brave. Otherwise you wouldn't have challenged me despite your weak state. Please bear with me, I'm not in a position to accept the challenge right now," said Veermalla, apologetically.

A few days later, King Kanakvarma went for a hunt. In the forest, they suddenly heard the growl of a tiger. The king's attendants saw the animal heading towards Kanakvarma. All of them took to their heels; their horses ran helter-skelter.

The king looked all around, to find out whether there was anyone to save him from the tiger. His expectation did not prove wrong. He saw Veermalla approaching the ferocious animal. He jumped on to the tiger and began hitting it on the head and in the neck. The animal freed itself from Veermalla and attacked him with his claws. Veermalla was injured. Still he

fought with the tiger and the animal soon dropped dead.

Kanakvarma embraced his bodyguard. "Veermalla! Today you've saved my life. How shall I reward you? I know, whatever I do or give may not be adequate to express my gratitude to you."

"Your Majesty, I'm your bodyguard," said Veermalla with humility. "I've only done my duty. I haven't done anything greater than that. And for my duty, you're already paying me every month."

The king called off the hunt and returned to the palace. He made arrangements for the treatment of Veermalla. After about a fortnight, Veermalla's injuries healed up.

Soon, the grand festival of Kalinga, Vasantotsav, was approaching. The main events were the several contests and competitions, and the people looked forward to participating in them or watching them. The huge maidan was beautifully decorated for the king's presence. People thronged all around the place. One of the contests was the taming of the bull tied in the centre of the arena. The people



waited with baited breath, as it had been announced that the prizewinner would receive ten thousand gold coins.

At the appointed hour, King Kanakvarma and Princess Kankangi arrived and took their seats. Veermalla stood behind the king, who was surrounded by his soldiers as well. Several strong men came forward to try their luck, but the bull would just not allow anyone to go anywhere near it. Whoever made an attempt got thrown out by the bull who fought with its horns and legs.



The bull was looking around to find whether any more people were approaching it. Suddenly it saw the red shawl worn by the king. It broke itself loose and rushed to where the king was seated. The king wondered—wherever he went, he was becoming the target of ferocious animals! Princess Kanakangi feared that the worst might happen and she began crying aloud. Others from the palace sitting behind the king and his daughter, too, shouted in fright.

Veermalla sensed the danger to the king. He rushed out of the

pavilion and jumped in front of the bull. Catching hold of its horns, he gave it a big push. The bull tried to free itself from Veermalla's catch. But he did not give it a chance. He suddenly let go the horns and cleverly got hold of the animal's legs and threw it on the ground. It bled profusely and lay motionless.

The people, who were watching all these with great excitement, shouted in joy and cheered Veermalla. "You've saved my life a second time, Veermalla!" said the king, embracing him. He then handed him the bag containing the gold coins.

"Your majesty! I did not participate in the contest," said Veermalla courteously. "If I had gone into the arena like a contestant and had succeeded in taming the bull, I would have deserved the prize. But what I did was to save you from an attacking animal. It won't be proper for me to accept the prize money."

"All right, Veermalla," said King Kanakvarma. "I quite appreciate your point. You need not accept the prize. But I wish to give you a better reward. I'm giving my daughter in marriage

to you. Will you accept her?"

"If the princess feels that I deserve her hand," remarked Veermalla, "I'm willing to marry her!"

Kanakvarma turned to Princess Kanakagi to find her shyly turning away her head. Soon, her wedding with Veermalla took place with great pomp.

The vampire concluded the story there and asked King Vikramaditya: "O King! Vamasen wanted to marry Kanakangi, so that he could rule over Kalinga as well. It was clear that he was brave, from the way he jumped on to an untamed horse and rode it. His cleverness cannot be doubted just because he was unable to control the horse. Though he had not recuperated well from his accident, he challenged Veermalla to a fight. There's no comparison between Veermalla and Vamasen. Didn't he refuse to fight Vamasen? He fought with the tiger as well as the bull because he wanted to save his own life. When the animals rushed to the king, Veermalla might have apprehended that they might also attack him. So, how can one conclude that he



was cleverer than Vamasen? If you know the answers but refuse to reveal them, mind you, your head will be blown to pieces."

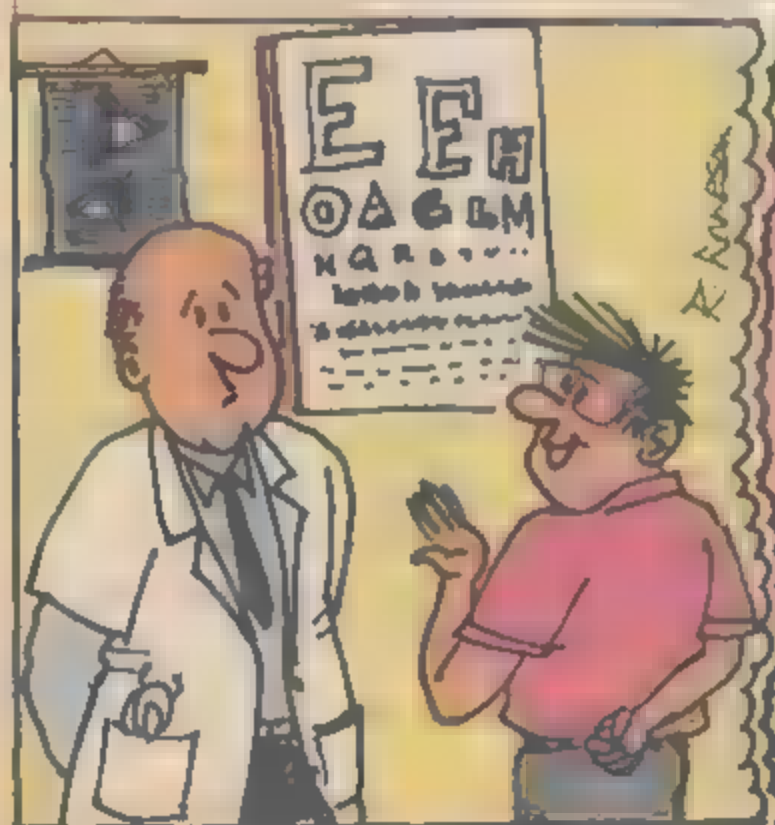
"There's no doubt that among the Kalinga warriors, Veermalla was the cleverest," said Vikramaditya. "Every one of Vamasen's actions was guided by his jealousy towards Veermalla. Veermalla was unwilling to fight Vamasen because all the injuries had not healed and he was still weak. By this, Veermalla proved that he was a real warrior, not wishing to fight with someone who was no match for him. It



wouldn't have behaved a warrior if he had fought a weak opponent. He faced the tiger and the bull only in performance of his duty of guarding the king and saving his life, not because he wanted to save his own skin. By all counts, Veermalla was cleverer than Vamasen. So, the king did the right thing in giving his

daughter in marriage to Veermalla."

The vampire realised that he had once again been outsmarted by the king. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse along with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



Eye specialist : Read what you see on the chart.

Gopu : Yes, I've read it.

Eye specialist : Read it aloud.

Gopu : What's the matter? Can't you read it?



Who is the 'Bard of Avon'?

— Bibhudutt Dash, Bhubaneswar

William Shakespeare, who was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in England, is popularly called the Bard of Avon.

What is the Asoka Chakra?

— Laxmidhar Gahan, Bhubaneswar

On January 26, 1950, India adopted the Asoka pillar (stambha) as the State emblem. The pillar, one of the several erected by Emperor Asoka of Kalinga after he embraced Buddhism, is preserved in the Sarnath museum. It is formed of four lions (only three are shown in the emblem, as the fourth is not visible) mounted on an abacus, with the Dharma Chakra (the Wheel of Law) in the centre, a bull on the right and a horse on the left. The words 'Satyameva Jayate' are inscribed at the base of the abacus. The Dharma Chakra on the pillar is called the Asoka Chakra, which is also depicted in our National flag and appears in blue in the middle of the central white strip.

Which are the five nations enjoying the power of 'Veto' in the United Nations?

— P.K. Badri, Hyderabad

Any one of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—China, France, the U.K., U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. (now Russia)— can exercise the power of Veto to prevent the passing of a resolution, though it may be voted for by the other four members and the ten non-permanent members. In short, it may be 1 against 14, but the will of the 1 will prevail!

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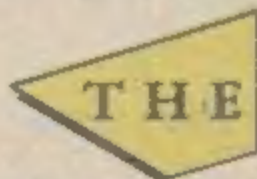
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M. Natarajan



M. Natarajan

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It is better to withhold a deserved rebuke than to administer it ungraciously.

— St. Francis de Sales

He who praises himself will soon find someone to deride him.

— Publilius Syrus

Conscience is a god to all mortals.

— Menander



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